What We Heard Report: Neighbourhood Revitalization – Balwin and Belvedere

June 27, 2019

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SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

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Executive Summary

In June 2018, Balwin and Belvedere were the latest communities to be approved by City Council for participation in the Neighbourhood Revitalization program. Balwin and Belvedere were selected and approved by Edmonton City Council after significant data driven analysis to determine opportunities of capital and social investment.

The Neighbourhood Revitalization program provides a dedicated City staff person to serve as the the Revitalization Coordinator. Neighbourhood Revitalization follows an asset-based community development approach meaning it focuses on existing community assets and strengths rather than problems, needs, and deficits. Neighbourhood Revitalization is about strengthening the great things happening in neighbourhoods by mobilizing citizens to identify and undertake actions to achieve priorities identified by local residents. Typically these are activities that bolster neighbourly connections, social and recreational opportunities, neighbourhood beautification and safety.

The public was engaged to help advise, refine, and create information for the Revitalization Strategy and were committed to working together with a positive, open mind to participate in the overall achievement of Neighbourhood Revitalization.

The public engagement design and facilitation was a collaborative process supported by the Community Working Group, the City of Edmonton and ZGM. The Community Working Group helped lead the process with support from the Revitalization Coordinator and ZGM team. This included input and ideas on how to best engage and communicate with the community, the goals and initiatives of Revitalization, and the design of the community public engagement workshop drop-in event. Members of the Community Working Group also facilitated conversations at the large public drop in events.

The engagement included:

- An initial engagement opportunity where Balwin and Belvedere communities attended a Neighbourhood Revitalization Meet and Greet event in November 2018
- 7 Community Working Group meetings between December 2018 and June 2019 to co-create the vision, communications and engagement process for Revitalization.
- 2 public engagement workshop drop-in events at Balwin Community League and Belvedere Community League to engage members of the Balwin and Belvedere neighbourhoods
- 9 focused neighbourhood conversations to support broad and inclusive neighbourhood representation and participation
- 4 invitations accepted by the Revitalization Coordinator from non profits operating within the neighbourhoods to attend their program/event to listen and learn from their participants about their experiences.

The Revitalization Strategy will be presented to the City Council in the Fall of 2019. The implementation of the Strategy will be community-led and supported by the City of Edmonton.

Background of Project and Objectives

Scope and Context

Neighbourhood Revitalization combines capital and social investment opportunities in neighbourhoods with high social vulnerability. Neighbourhood Revitalization uses a place-based and asset-based community development approach. This community-led approach, originally developed by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann, is built on four foundational elements (Kretzmann, 2010; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003):

1. It focuses on community assets and strengths rather than problems and needs
2. It identifies and mobilizes individual and community assets, skills, and passions
3. It is community-driven
4. It is relationship-driven

The Revitalization Coordinator works with neighbourhood leaders to mobilize a community to identify and carry out actions that achieve a greater sense of place, increase safety, and create cleaner and more attractive streetscapes. Investments support places to gather and establish stronger relationships between neighbours. Neighbourhood Revitalization initiatives play a significant role in renewing connection between residents and local businesses.

Revitalization work is accomplished through:

- Bridging local needs to broader needs
- Creating a collaborative environment in our work
- Sustaining our initiatives and goals in neighbourhoods and business sectors
- Elevating and transforming from good to great communities
- Building on community capacity and local wisdom
- Being purposeful, inspirational and forward-thinking

At the local level, Neighbourhood Revitalization is supported by other community development staff within the City of Edmonton. These staff are the Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator, the Community Development Social Worker and the Community Safety Liaison.

How Did We Get Here

Balwin and Belvedere were approved by City Council in June 2018 for participation in the Neighbourhood Revitalization program. The project plan was created between October 2018 and January 2019, with the public engagement frame being finalized late January.

This included identification of the Community Working Group whose key responsibilities were:

- Driving the development of the Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy for Balwin and Belvedere Communities
- Creating opportunities, through various engagement initiatives, for as many people to be involved in the engagement process as possible
- Advising and supporting the design and implementation of a robust public engagement and communications plan
- Bringing local knowledge, experience and networks to the initiative
- Acting as ambassadors for Neighbourhood Revitalization within the community
- Providing community-based feedback, input and expertise in all of the above mentioned areas

Members were appointed following one-on-one conversations with the Revitalization Coordinator through a series of questions. The structure of the group was intentional and consisted of up to twelve individuals representing an intersection of identities. This included a diversity of age, culture, gender, residents, non-profit organization representatives, business owners, and more to reflect an equitable mix of both Balwin and Belvedere:

- Up to six community residents who live within the boundaries of Balwin and Belvedere (three Balwin, three Belvedere)
- One Community League representative for each neighbourhood (One Balwin, One Belvedere)
- One Fort Road and Area Business Improvement Area representative (Executive Director or alternate)
- One business representative not part of the Business Improvement Area who owns/operates a business within Balwin and/or Belvedere
- Up to three non-profits/social agencies serving the Balwin and/or Belvedere community

The Community Working Group met monthly from December 2018 until June 2019. Several group members also contributed at the two community public engagement workshop drop-in events and focused neighbourhood discussions sharing information about Revitalization and gathering input from community members.

Public Engagement Statement

The City of Edmonton Public Engagement Charter created in the Fall of 2018 supports the development of the Balwin and Belvedere Revitalization Strategy. The ultimate goal of the engagement plan is to define the priorities for each area's Revitalization Strategy which will be presented to City Council in the Fall of 2019. The Public Engagement statement asks the question:

How do we mobilize and support community to identify strengths, issues, and priorities to create and implement a strategy that builds more vibrant, inclusive, healthy, safe, and attractive neighbourhoods?

Public engagement improves the work of Neighbourhood Revitalization by:

- Gathering local knowledge of the neighbourhood to inform strategy creation
- Creating a relationship with residents built on trust and respect
- Strengthening capacity in community members to carry out community-led initiatives
- Developing a sense of pride and ownership among residents by participating in the creation of the revitalization vision and strategy, and implementing projects to meet the aspirations in the Strategy

The outcome of public engagement for Neighbourhood Revitalization is to complement the asset-based community development process in enhancing the community capacity building when working with the City to co-create the Revitalization vision and strategy.

The Public Engagement spectrum explains the four roles (Advise, Refine, Create, Decide) that the public may have when they participate in City of Edmonton public engagement activities. As you move within the spectrum there is an increasing level of public influence and commitment from both the City and the public.

The public's impact in decision making is listed in the phases below.

Spectrum and Commitment to the Public

Public engagement includes advising, refining, creating, and deciding in order to assist in the success of Neighbourhood Revitalization. Through the process of strategy development the following roles and actions were taken by the public and the City.

Building relationships

ADVISE

+ Identifying stakeholders and community leaders
+ Establishing Strategy Development Working Group
+ Sharing knowledge of the neighbourhood

REFINE

+ Creating the governance structure

CREATE

+ Collaborating on the creation of a public engagement and communications plan

Developing the Strategy

ADVISE

+ Choosing what questions to ask and who to ask in a public engagement plan
+ Providing feedback on public engagement approaches

REFINE

+ Reviewing and providing input on the completeness of information about the community
+ Setting priorities from information received
+ Identifying what might be missing
+ Incorporating feedback into final vision, strategy, and criteria success for Council review

CREATE

+ Developing a draft vision, strategy, desired outcomes and criteria for success (i.e. performance measurement) for community consideration
+ Developing governance structure for Strategy
+ Development Working Group

Implementing the Strategy

ADVISE

+ Identifying stakeholders and community leaders

REFINE

+ Creating work plans for projects
+ Identifying decisions within projects where the Working Group needs input from residents
+ Planning and implementing public engagement when required
+ Using community networks to encourage participation in community initiatives

Through the course of the strategy development phase, public input was used to:

+ Determine how to best engage and communicate with residents and stakeholders
+ Identify community leaders
+ Identify gaps and needs of social and economic initiatives, and possibly infrastructure
+ Co-create a Revitalization vision
+ Identify what success will look like

Summary of Public Engagement Activities

The engagement strategy involved one Meet and Greet Event, two community public engagement workshop drop-in events, six Community Working Group meetings, nine focused neighbourhood discussions and four opportunities to listen and learn from groups within the neighbourhood.

Balwin and Belvedere communities were first engaged at a Neighbourhood Revitalization Meet and Greet event that took place on November 21, 2018 at Balwin Villa, Excel Society with a total of **66 attendees.** The participants were asked to comment on the statement, "for me ... Neighbourhood Revitalization means ..." This was an initial step in obtaining feedback to gauge understanding of Revitalization. The information collected was used to shape how project information was created and shared.

Community Working Group Meetings

The meetings occurred between December 2018 and June 2019:

***Dec 6** – Belvedere Community League – 5:30 – 8:45 p.m.*

***Jan 8** – Balwin Community League 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.*

***Feb 12** – Belvedere Community League – 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.*

***Mar 12** – Balwin Community League – 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.*

***Apr 9th** – Belvedere Community League – 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.*

***May 14** – Balwin Community League – 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.*

***Jun 19** – Trinity Christian Reformed Church - 5:30- 8:30 p.m.*

Twelve citizens volunteered to be members of the working group that contributed to the development of the Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy for Balwin and Belvedere communities. They created opportunities, through various engagement initiatives, for as many people to be involved in the engagement process as possible. The Working Group provided advice and supported the design and implementation of a robust public engagement and communications plan. Individual members brought local knowledge, experience and networks to the initiative. Members acted as ambassadors for Neighbourhood Revitalization within the community and provided community-based feedback, input and expertise throughout the process.

Community Public Engagement Workshop Drop-In Events

A community public engagement workshop drop-in event took place on February 2 from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Balwin Community League to build awareness and understanding of Revitalization. There were 40 attendees at this event.

The meeting began by sharing information about Revitalization, why specific communities were chosen and information on place and asset-based community development. We asked community members to identify their priorities on how best to strengthen their communities in the areas of beautification, neighbourly connection, business and economic vibrancy and safety. Attendees were invited to get involved in initiatives that could make their community stronger.

The next community public engagement workshop drop-in event took place on May 4 from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Belvedere Community League to further engage and provide the community with projects and initiatives that had been identified. There were 75 attendees at this event. This meeting allowed attendees to review and refine the overall vision, provide feedback on the identified initiatives and sign up to participate in the ongoing, sustainable development of the projects/initiatives with support from the Revitalization Coordinator.

The City of Edmonton's Station Pointe project team was also in attendance to inform attendees of an upcoming engagement session exploring a rezoning at the Station Pointe site.

PARTICIPANTS:

- Participants who attended the community public engagement workshop drop-in events were residents, organizations and business owners/operators from Balwin and Belvedere.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTION (EVENT 1):

- A postcard distributed throughout the community
- Roadside signs
- Social Media Advertising (Facebook)
- Organic social media mentions from City of Edmonton (Facebook & Twitter)
- 311 Messaging

COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTION (EVENT 2):

- A postcard distributed throughout the community
- Roadside signs
- Yard signs
- Posters at the Community League Hall
- Organic social media mentions from City of Edmonton (Facebook, Twitter)
- 311 messaging

Focused Neighbourhood Discussions

The City's Revitalization Project staff felt it was important to hear from groups who do not typically come out to large public engagement events. The importance of broad and inclusive neighbourhood representation and participation was echoed by members of the Community Working Group who identified the need to speak with youth, seniors, the business community and the multicultural community. There were nine focused neighbourhood discussions that happened: two rounds of focused conversations with youth and seniors; three rounds with the business community; one focused conversation with individuals attending the Al Omari Masjid (the timing of the second conversation fell within Ramadan and was unable to occur); and one additional focused neighbourhood conversation that was requested from a small group of seniors living in Balwin. These conversations took place between February 2019 and May 2019 and were led by the consultant from ZGM supported by the Revitalization Coordinator and some members of the community working group. The purpose of these conversations was to provide input into the vision, projects and overall strategy.

Community members and stakeholders were asked questions pertaining to how they live in the neighbourhood (including good things and challenges), how connected they feel with their neighbours, what safety issues may exist, where residents access services for basic needs (including health, grocery, finances, and shopping), how residents use the open spaces in the neighbourhood on a year-round, all-season recreation and socializing basis, what the distinct identity of the neighbourhood is, how to ensure Neighbourhood Revitalization meets the needs in an inclusive and diverse manner, and where they would like to see their community in the future.

The following list is a summary of the focused neighbourhood discussions:

February 15, 2019 - Small group of Balwin Residents

February 26, 2019 - Seniors/Community drop-in at Belvedere Community League

March 13, 2019 - Youth group running at Trinity Christian Reformed Church

March 20, 2019 - Balwin/Belvedere Business hosted at the Landlord and Tenant Board

April 1, 2019 - Balwin/Belvedere Business hosted at China Village Restaurant

April 11, 2019 – Multi-Cultural Community hosted at Masjid Al Omari

May 14, 2019 – Seniors/Community drop-in at Belvedere Community League

May 15, 2019 – Youth group at Trinity Church

May 23, 2019 – Balwin/Belvedere Businesses hosted at Landlord and Tenant Board

There were approximately **66 individuals** who participated in the focused neighbourhood conversations. The vast majority were residents, including seniors, youth, and people from a multiplicity of cultures. Others were representatives from local organizations, Balwin/Belvedere business owners/operators, and the Executive Director of the Fort Road Business Association.

Listen and Learn Opportunities

Over the course of the strategy development phase, the Revitalization Coordinator accepted 4 invitations from institutions/non-profits operating within the neighbourhood to attend their program/event to listen and learn from their participants about the experiences. Through these invitations, the Revitalization Coordinator was able to expand the opportunities for broad and inclusive neighbourhood representation.

The following is a list of these invitations:

February 28, 2019 – The Mosaic Centre

April 16, 2019 and June 3, 2019 – Students from Balwin School

April 27, 2019 – RAJO Project, Canadian Friends of Somalia

May 14, 2019 – The Gathering Place

Connecting in the Neighbourhood

Connection to the various groups was provided by members of the Community Working Group through personal connections to schools, faith-based groups, businesses or an existing seniors' group. Some members of the Community Working Group also conducted door-to-door invitations within the business community in both neighbourhoods. The Revitalization Coordinator also worked with the City of Edmonton's Community Development Social Worker, Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator, Youth Program Coordinator and the Youth Liaison through The Family Centre to arrange opportunities for engagement within the neighbourhood.

What We Heard: **Community Working Group Meetings**

Identified Community Working Group members met between December 6, 2018 and June 19, 2019 to discuss ongoing areas of the project. They offered feedback, creativity, discussion and direction on the development of the Revitalization Strategy including the public engagement and communication plans. The working group synthesized data from the various engagement opportunities to set the direction for the identified projects in years one and two.

1. What Makes a Great Community?

SAFETY

- A safe community
- Good transportation systems, businesses, and institutions

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS

- Inclusivity and respect for neighbours and the community as a whole
- A multicultural community where diversity is celebrated, and people feel connected and included
- Programs that support, educate, and empower the entire community including seniors and youth
- A community with activities for kids including outdoor programs

2. How do We Engage with the Community?

- Deliver postcards and place any updates within the community newsletter
- Approach schools to empower youth students
- Administer surveys
- Presentations at town hall with a Q&A session

3. How Will We Define Success?

+ People buying and/or building in the neighbourhood along with the emergence of new businesses
+ Acknowledgement that Balwin and Belvedere are good neighbourhoods
+ A hopeful attitude and high level of contribution towards Revitalization
+ The wishes of the larger community being reflected in the decided upon project plans
+ A feeling of vibrancy in the community
+ The opportunity for Working Group members to strengthen their own skills

4. Which Group of Individuals Do We Involve for Focused Neighbourhood Conversations?

+ A long list of possibilities was generated by the working group; eventually, prioritized demographics were suggested:
+ Seniors
+ Youth
+ New Canadians/Multicultural
+ Business Owners/Educators

5. How do we Create a Dynamic Drop-In Event?

ROOM ENGAGEMENT

+ Available working group members to participate as co-facilitators
+ Providing examples on display boards of what Revitalization can look like including what other communities have done in the past
+ An itemized list of initiatives within categories to help guide the discussion and have the community place dots identifying what they agree or disagree with and what they want to prioritize

REMOTE PARTICIPATION

+ A way for people to contact the working group and provide input even if they are not present for the drop-in events i.e. a phone number, email address, social media outlet such as the community Facebook page

6. Vision Statement Development

+ A wordle was created by the Working Group and displayed at a public engagement workshop drop-in event to help form the Revitalization vision statement.

"Belvedere and Balwin are committed to creating proud, safe and diverse communities that support and value their people and businesses"

7. What Are the Neighbourhood Goals for Revitalization?

- Effective representation for businesses and residents including pride of one's space
- A transformation of the community including changed perceptions and opinions to ultimately display respect for all
- Physical growth for the community including enhanced infrastructure and an increase in property values
- Social issues being addressed and solutions for displaced individuals in the area
- More engagement from youth and other cultures in community events
- A heightened profile for the Excel Society
- Sustainability within the community
- A sense of pride and diversity
- A general feeling of safety

8. General Initiatives Identified (From Early Data)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- A block party on Fort Road
- Hosting one large outdoor community event each year complete with music, food, and activities
- Implementation of a website/signage and expanded social media platforms to promote community events — identified as a top priority
    - A historical project i.e. a historical walk, book, or website project — A large majority of the community members identified this idea as a top priority and the potential for it to increase both community connections and economic vibrancy
    - Career night

BEAUTIFICATION

- A large community clean-up event. A large majority of the community members identified this idea as a top priority
- Permanent community signage
- Initiatives for derelict properties
- Memorial benches
- Strengthening Braid's Park

ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

- A painting program for businesses aside from just 66 St.
- Mural projects from local artists with a historical focus
- A grant writer from the City
- A food truck event (planned around the LRT and other food events in the City)

SAFETY

- Lighting within Balwin Park and the Belvedere Community League
- Amenities within Balwin Park such as picnic tables
- Safety/Community patrols
- An EPS night with the police chief who will be invited to other community events

What We Did

- We utilized information provided by the Working Group to guide our approach to all areas of the Revitalization strategy including the focused neighbourhood discussions and public engagement drop-in events
- Using the information shared by the Community Working Group we determined how to best engage and communicate with residents and stakeholders in the community
- We co-hosted the community public engagement drop-in events and some of the focused neighbourhood discussions with members of the Working Group
- We co-created a Revitalization vision to share with the community
- We synthesized data from the engagement events to develop project ideas and refine the initiatives

What We Changed

The priority for the focused neighbourhood discussions were slightly altered due to the nature of accessing certain groups within the proposed time frame. The Neighbourhood Revitalization Coordinator also conducted four engagement opportunities outside of the initial project plan to collect and include a wider range of feedback.

Clarifying the Initiatives

- Drawing from the data gathered and initiatives identified by the Working Group, focused neighbourhood discussions, and the first community public engagement drop-in event, we fine-tuned the final initiatives that would be presented to the community for their feedback
- This was based on our commitment to asset-based practice and identifying which initiatives were a common thread throughout the public engagement process
- The proposed top initiatives that would be presented to the community in the second drop-in public engagement workshops are highlighted in bold

ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

- Painting program for businesses
- Mural project with a historical focus using a local artist
- Grant Writer
- **Food truck event — Station Pointe**

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Fort Road Block Party
- Outdoor Activity Event
- **Website/Signage to promote community (events/activities/initiatives/services/etc.)**
- **Historical project**
- Career night

BEAUTIFICATION

- **Big Bin Event/Neighbourhood Clean-up**
- Permanent Community Signage
- Initiatives for derelict properties
- Memorial benches
- Strengthening Braid's Park

SAFETY

- Lighting within Balwin Park and Belvedere Park
- Amenities within Balwin Park and Belvedere Park i.e. picnic tables
- Safety/community patrol
- Edmonton Police Services night

It was decided that a priority for safety would be decided at the second community public engagement workshop drop-in event.

What We Heard:
Community Public Engagement Drop-In Events

Drop-in 1

The first community public engagement workshop drop-in event took place February 2, 2019.

1. What the Community Loves About their Neighbourhood

GREEN SPACE

+ Love of the community's green spaces
+ A good amount of parks and playgrounds

COMMUNITY

+ Activities at the Balwin Community centre
+ Diversity
+ Great neighbours
+ Mental health support

LOCATION

+ Proximity to shopping: groceries, library, parks, etc.
+ Close to an LRT station

INFRASTRUCTURE

+ A mix of architecture
+ The older neighbourhood feel is enjoyable
+ Spacious lots and alleyways
+ Small schools

2. Input on Assets that Could be Enhanced

+ Adding picnic tables to the hill to encourage more use of the space
+ Adding more activities and better lighting in the parks and improving maintenance/appearance
+ Finishing Station Pointe (Fort Road revitalization)
+ Removing Balwin park baseball diamond to use as playable green space
+ Using the Canadian Tire location for a big farmer's market

3. Input on Beautifying the Community

+ 128 Ave and 66 St.: filling in the empty lots
+ Lights, trees, and planters being installed along Fort Road
+ Shrubs and plants, encouraging greenery
+ A clean neighbourhood: residents cleaning up yards (this could be a "most beautiful yard" contest)
+ Cleaning up with Big-Bin events

4. Input on Creating Better Connections

- Volunteer involvement at St. Francis Centre for their not-for-profit groups
- More events: block parties, winter carnivals, organized soccer, community days, etc.
  - Make these drop-in events as not everyone can commit to registered programs
- Drop-in programs and community sports
- Eco/Green initiatives such as Community gardens or bee-keeping
- A yearly event specific to Balwin residents such as a yearly block party or festival
- Community Farmer's market
- More frequent communication of events and issues via websites, social media, and the community newsletter
- Social programs for specific groups such as seniors or teenagers

5. Input on Increasing Economic Vibrancy

- Allowing community member involvement within the Business Improvement Area along Fort Road
- Incentives for improving small, community owned businesses such as bakeries, flower shops, and salons
- Ideas for new businesses in the area: hip coffee shops and restaurants with patios
- Grant to fix up the existing, run-down buildings

6. Input on Increasing Safety

- A need for information regarding the rail cars due to noise and exhaust pollution
- Knowing your neighbours
- An off-leash dog park or group dog walking initiative
- Self-defense classes
- More available information of services in the area
- Emergency phone stations
- More marked crosswalks
- More police or community patrols
- Improving run-down sidewalks as they are difficult for some to walk on
- Police and Fire participating at Community Days

Drop-in 2

The second large public engagement event occurred on May 4, 2019, where residents, organizations and businesses were able to review the initiatives that the Working Group and City of Edmonton put forward based on the feedback from the first public engagement session and some of the focused neighbourhood conversations.

For each area of initiatives, the community was asked if they support the initiatives listed in bold:

ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

Food truck event — Station Pointe

+ The participants identified that existing, run-down businesses require attention and new businesses could exist in vacant buildings along Fort Road
+ The participants identified new businesses as being a priority to the community

BEAUTIFICATION

Big Bin Event/Neighbourhood Clean-up

+ There was support for the bolded initiative the Working Group had put forward (Big Bin Event/Neighbourhood Clean-up) — specifically the neighbourhood clean-up
+ Participants provided ideas for clean-up events such as localized beautification competitions or bylaw enforcement to help get individual properties cleaned up
+ A number of participants want run-down buildings to be repurposed as a beautification initiative prioritized before a Big Bin Event
+ Maintenance of green spaces and small parks was also mentioned in regard to clean-up initiatives

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Website/Signage to Promote Community (events/activities/initiatives/services/etc.) and a Historical Project

+ Community members somewhat supported a website/signage to promote community events, activities, initiatives, services, etc.
+ The community somewhat supported a historical project and provided details that would make this project a success including: a historical walk and a new image for the historical Fort Road area making it a must-see destination people from all parts of Edmonton want to attend
+ Other commentary regarding community connections included a need for more supplies and activities in the parks such as games equipment and community sports

SAFETY

Safety/Community Patrol and Edmonton Police Services night

+ Community members were in support of the safety initiatives, especially an opportunity to connect with EPS
+ A high number of participants indicated that crosswalks need attention in terms of pedestrian safety (specifically, a crossing light at 66 St. transit)
+ A need for better lighting along 66 St. and in alleyways was identified

CAPITAL ENGAGEMENT

- Community members selected their priorities from a list of spaces generated from all of the public engagement between November 2018 and May 2019
- The highest number of participants were in support of enhancing Fort Road/66 St node (66 St. – 62 St. and Fort Road to 129 Ave)
- The second initiative with high amounts of support was lighting in Belvedere Park and next to the Community League

The majority of participants supported the vision statement and nine community members signed up to be a part of a project team.

What We Did (With the Input)

- Reviewed the information from both public engagement sessions to identify key themes and identify projects and initiatives for Revitalization in the first two years of the program
- Enlisted community members in areas where they are able to offer support in Revitalization and had them sign up to become a part of a project team
- Co-created a Revitalization Vision
- Validated projects through the data gathered

What We Changed

- By recognizing which initiatives the community has shown the most interest in we changed the priorities to reflect the community's wants.

Implementation Structure – Feedback from Working Group

- The identified priorities will be the focus for the next one to two years followed by re-evaluation to determine if the projects are still relevant
- It is recommended for the implementation team to meet quarterly (four meetings total per year)
- It is recommended to have an Action Team (project team), Guiding Team (Implementation Steering Committee), and a Revitalization Connection Team (Revitalization Services Team)

What We Heard:
Focused Neighbourhood Conversations

1. Favourite Spaces

- Belvedere School, specifically the park area
- Station Pointe rezoning and the opportunity for business development in the neighbourhood
- Braid's Park (136 Ave and 60 St.)
- The green space at 127 Ave and 79 St. (used as informal park)
- Robert Brett Park (134a Ave and 57 St.)

2. Opportunities for Revitalization

ECONOMIC VIBRANCY

- The Belvedere LRT has opportunity for development, especially with the unique connection to Station Pointe attracting business and customers
- Connect the new Kathleen Andrews Transit Garage to the business development at Station Pointe
- Providing incentives to open businesses in the community such as hair salons and grocery stores to keep the economy within the community; this would create jobs for community members including youth

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- There is a need for younger residents to move into Balwin. Participation in community events for Balwin is decreasing as the community ages.
- The Square at Station Point (NE corner of 66 St. and Fort Road) was identified as a potential venue for activities such as a food truck or pop-up market
- A need for engagement of people who live in transitional housing or use drop-in services was identified
- The participants suggested hosting community events such as a Capital City Clean-up with a community BBQ following as an incentive
- The participants suggested incorporating picnic tables and BBQs at Braids Park to enhance the area — could host community "Meet your Neighbours" BBQ/event
- The participants suggested opening the youth events at Masjid Al Omari to all youth in the neighbourhood
- Creating events such as community walking groups or "Coffee with a Cop"
- Promoting existing community drop-in sessions at Belvedere Community League
- Utilizing gymnasium spaces in the community for various activities
- Creating activities targeted at specific groups such as mothers and toddlers, kids aged 4 — 12, teenagers, a men's group and establishing and maintaining an inventory to promote and track these groups
- Converting the Transit Hotel into a

community museum

- Youth mentioned they enjoy their open gym time at Trinity Church and would like to see this happen more frequently, for a longer period of time
- Youth from Balwin School mentioned they want to participate in making positive changes in their community, by volunteering, sharing the word about programs and events, etc.

BEAUTIFICATION

- Community members showed interest in the opportunity for murals
- Community gardens was a popular idea — potential for these in Robert Brett Park or behind the Belvedere Community League
  - Youth mentioned they would like to help with the gardens
- A need for more garbage cans was mentioned (specifically along Fort Road)
- Community clean-up events were mentioned
- Enhancing the park at 127 Ave and 97 St with garbage cans and benches was mentioned
- A need for a better waste management system that does not cost residents extra money but instead brings the community together i.e. Big Bin events or the rental of a large truck was mentioned
- A need for the maintenance of potholes was mentioned
- Redevelopment of Robert Brett Park was mentioned

SAFETY

- Safety was mentioned as a general concern in the community, specifically during evenings and nighttime; this was echoed by youth in the community
- A need for more police presence was identified
- Community members wanting to learn how they can support and encourage safety amongst themselves was mentioned
- A number of people liked the idea of a community walking group that would double as a community patrol group
- The participants mentioned deliberately scheduled activities around the communities could help to discourage crime
- Additional lighting was identified as a solution to help to address safety issues

What We Did

- Determined how to best engage and communicate with residents and stakeholders
- Identified gaps and needs of social and economic initiatives and possibly infrastructure
- Used the feedback from the focused neighbourhood discussions to help identify the projects and initiatives that would be put forward to the larger community

What We Changed

Information provided by the focused neighbourhood discussions told us there was a lack of clarity regarding Revitalization; a more finalized definition of the program would be needed before attempting to gain feedback from the community again. We recognized the need to motivate involvement from the community, which lead to more significant focus on communication materials such as postcards and social media promotions.

For the second youth session, small tables were set up to encourage more conversation as some found it difficult to speak and/or hear in a large group. We also sought out an older group of youth to engage.

Key Themes and Actions of Public Engagement

COMMUNITY HOPES AND GOALS

+ Creating a community that embodies diversity, involvement, neighbourly connections, and safety.

EXISTING ASSETS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

+ The community identified their green spaces as an existing asset to be built on; Braids Park and Robert Brett Park are green spaces that are enjoyed by many community members and have capacity for a number of projects and initiatives
+ The existing, derelict buildings were also an asset that the community would like to see revived to encourage both economic vibrancy and beautification
+ The community identified Station Pointe as a space with capacity for activities that can provide economic and community connecting opportunities

DECIDING ON PRIORITIES

+ The community wants to address safety through the strengths of community members
+ Safety is a general concern and while it deserves its own category, a number of actions within beautification, community connections, and economic vibrancy will help to address the issue of safety
+ Neighbourhood clean-up events are needed and will help to improve almost all areas of Revitalization
+ There was support for deepening the communication and connection with Edmonton Police Services. The Revitalization coordinator will explore the implementation of this initiative
+ *Identification of priority initiatives:* Big Bin Event/Neighbourhood Clean-up (beautification), Website/Signage to promote community information, a historical project (community connections), and a Food Truck Event at Station Pointe (economic vibrancy)

FOCUSED NEIGHBOURHOOD DISCUSSIONS

+ The community felt it was important to prioritize Seniors, Youth, the Balwin and Belvedere Businesses, and the Multi-Cultural Community for ongoing neighbourhood focused discussions
+ An age gap was identified within the communities; there is a need for these groups (youth, young adults, and seniors) to come together
+ A need for a variety of diverse groups in the community to come together was also identified

What's Next

FOR THE PROJECT

- A Revitalization Strategy document will be written and designed based on the public engagement information found in this What We Heard Report
- The Revitalization Coordinator will continue to build new relationships and support community leaders using a placed-based and an asset-based community development approach
- The Revitalization Strategy for Balwin and Belvedere will be presented to City Council in Fall of 2019

FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Once the strategy is made public, there will be a launch event to recognize the community contributions over the last year and the various ways members of public can get involved in Neighbourhood Revitalization work in Balwin and Belvedere

The Journey

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
November 21, 2019 Neighbourhood Meet and Greet Event Balwin Villa (5:00 – 8:00 p.m.)	Project introduction to the neighbourhood What is revitalization and how you can get involved	60 attendees comprised of residents, organizations and business owners in Balwin and Belvedere Event hosted by: City of Edmonton Revitalization Coordinator, Community Planner, Management Supervisor, Community Development Social Worker, Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator, Community Safety Liaison, Youth Liaison	Interested individuals signed up to participate in the Strategy Development Working Group Discussion and dialogue on the purpose and intent of revitalization Prevalent Themes: + Community + Transportation + Neighbourhood Renewal + Park Development + Parks and Roads operations + Safety + Zoning
December 6, 2019 Community Working Group meeting #1 Belvedere Community League (5:30 – 8:45 p.m.)	First meeting to introduce the background of Revitalization and gather advice towards performance measures of the project and insight towards outreach for focused neighbourhood discussions	The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	Identification of what a great community looks like and decisions made on how to engage the community/focused neighbourhood discussions and measure the success of Revitalization Identification of a need for timelines to shift in the engagement plan and the creation of a draft agenda for the community drop-ins

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
January 8, 2019 Community Working Group meeting #2 Balwin Community League (5:30 – 8:30 p.m.)	Discussion of the public engagement spectrum and a review of what asset-based means for community development and Revitalization outcomes. WG to advise and refine February drop-in plans	The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	WG determined the drop-ins need to clarify what Revitalization is by providing examples and have a contact for community members to reach in case they do not speak at the event or cannot attend. The The Working Group to act as co-facilitators at the drop-ins. The Working Group provided advice on what questions to ask at the drop-in and outreach tactics to ensure high attendance.
February 2, 2019 Public Engagement Workshop Drop-In #1 Balwin Community League (12:00 – 4:00 p.m.)	The drop-in served to ADVISE the community about revitalization and CREATE a draft list of the community's ideas to make the neighbourhood an even greater place to live, work, and play	40 attendees of residents, organizations and business owners in Balwin and Belvedere Event co-hosted by: The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	Identification of spaces the community currently loves Feedback regarding what would make existing areas/assets in Balwin and Belvedere even better
February 12, 2019 Community Working Group meeting #3 Belvedere Community League (5:30 – 8:30 p.m.)	Reviewing major themes of drop-in #1 and helping to ADVISE and REFINE projects and initiatives	The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	Identification of what the community would do to improve beatification, community connections, economic vibrancy, and safety There is a need to identify any barriers that may keep community members from engaging in projects. There is a general sense of safety in the neighbourhoods, whereas economic vibrancy is a more pressing concern; beautification and community connections are mild to moderate concerns

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
February 15, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Discussion #1 Balwin residents (11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on their favourite spaces in the community and offer potential Revitalization initiatives	8 attendees of Balwin residents and the COE Revitalization Coordinator	Identification of spaces the community currently loves Feedback regarding what would make existing areas/assets in Balwin and Belvedere even better Identification of what the community would do to improve beatification, community connections, economic vibrancy, and safety The residents love the location of the community and a number of businesses (primarily restaurants) They identified a need to address safety by adding more lighting and EPS presence
February 26, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Discussion #2 Belvedere Community League (9:00 – 11:30 a.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on their favourite spaces in the community and areas for improvement	10 attendees of Seniors/ Community drop-in participants The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	The community enjoys their existing green spaces — these are assets There is a need for maintenance and clean-up of the existing spaces and the creation of more activities/programs for specific groups which would help alleviate safety concerns if the community is active and together There is a desire to connect with the City to have ongoing communications regarding community concerns

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
February 28, 2019 Listen and Learn Opportunity #1 The Mosaic Centre (11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on their favourite spaces in the community and areas for improvement	6 participants of the Mosaic Centre, COE Revitalization Coordinator	Positives include the friendly clients and staff along with a homey/relaxed feeling This group identified a need for more safety within Belvedere areas through more EPS presence and better supports for people along with a need to build connections in the community through events such as movie/ karaoke nights
March 12, 2019 Community Working Group meeting #4 Balwin Community League (5:30 – 8:30 p.m.)	A review of the drop-in and community data and helping to ADVISE and REFINE projects and initiatives	The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	Looking at the community data informed the Working Group that there are a high number of seniors and youth in the area and cost is a barrier for participation for some The WG listed their hopes for Revitalization based on community feedback and chose projects and initiatives aligned with the categories of economic vibrancy, community connections, beautification, and safety
March 13, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Discussion #3 Youth Group Trinity Christian Reformed Church (7:00 – 8:30 p.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on their favourite spaces in the community and provide potential Revitalization initiatives	15 Youth, The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	Positives included a number of places youth feel they can go in the community, but they do need assistance in coordinating activities Areas for improvements included Robert Brett Park, soccer initiatives, opportunities for skills development, a Green Shack program, Youth nights at Trinity Church, community beautification, and addressing safety concerns

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
March 20, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Discussion #4 Landlord and Tenant Board (11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on their favourite spaces in the community and provide potential Revitalization initiatives	8 attendees comprised of the business community, Fort Road and Area Business Improvement Area, Mosaic Centre, The Working Group, City of Edmonton Revitalization Coordinator, ZGM	Positives included parks and green spaces along with optimism towards Station Pointe bringing development to the community Areas for improvement included business development in the community, more participation in community events along with events that are targeted towards the age groups in the community, utilizing the square at Station Pointe for events such as a pop-up market, community gardens, and addressing safety concerns (especially at night) through more EPS presence There is also a need for better connections with the City
April 1, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Discussion #5 China Village Restaurant (6:00 – 8:00 p.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on their favourite spaces in the community and provide potential Revitalization initiatives	8 attendees comprised of the business community, The Working Group, City of Edmonton Revitalization Coordinator	Positives included location, particularly the busy business exposure on 66 Street and proximity to the LRT. This group was primarily concerned about safety and mentioned improvement through better lighting, safety awareness, and EPS presence. This group identified a need for more trees and residential clean-ups to improve beautification, initiatives such as Community BBQs to improve community connections, and the promotion of local shops and improvements of run-down businesses to increase economic vibrancy

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
April 9, 2019 Community Working Group meeting #5 Belvedere Community League (5:30 – 8:30 p.m.)	Reviewing Revitalization goals, the vision statement, the design for the second drop-in, and determining initiatives/priorities	The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	The Working Group made a decision to not include the word "safety" in the vision statement, as safety will come along with achieving the community goals The group determined the priority initiatives to be a food truck event, a historical project, website/signage/social media programming, and a Big Bin event or Neighbourhood clean-up. There was discussion around projects tying into each other to address more than one area at a time The drop-in design to include one Working Group member facilitating at each of the priority areas (boards)
April 11, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Discussion #6 Masjid Al Omari (7:00 – 8:30 p.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on concerns in the neighbourhood and potential Revitalization initiatives	8 attendees comprised of members of the Al Omari Masjid, WG Member, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	Concerns about the Fort Road and 66 St. area were identified, particularly safety and a lack of economic energy Areas to be improved upon included enhancement of public parks and spaces, revival of businesses, and beautification which included recommendations of community clean-ups and community gardens This community addressed their need to be more open and active within the broader community

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April 16, 2019 and June 3, 2019 Listen and Learn Opportunity #2 Balwin School	The group helped to ADVISE on concerns in the neighbourhood and potential Revitalization initiatives	15 students from Balwin School, Youth Liaison from the Family Centre, Success coach at Balwin School, COE Revitalization Coordinator	Analysis of hot (welcoming) and cold (non welcoming) spaces within the neighbourhoods and why this is the case. Strong need for increased safety in the neighbourhood. More recreation programs and amenities in the green spaces in both neighbourhoods. Youth want to participate in making positive change in their neighbourhood
April 27, 2019 Listen and Learn Opportunity #3 RAJO Project Canadian Friends of Somalia	The Revitalization Coordinator was invited to attend a community event.	20-25 attendees from the Somal community	Shared information on health determinants in the community, youth mental health needs, gang violence, and more.
May 4, 2019 Public Engagement Workshop Drop-In #2 Belvedere Community League (12:00 – 4:00 p.m.)	The second drop-in worked to REFINE the goals, outcomes, and priority initiatives of Revitalization through community feedback, CREATE a final vision, and allow community members to sign-up to be a part of a project team	75 attendees of residents, organizations and business owners in Balwin and Belvedere, The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator and ZGM	The community is in favour of a neighbourhood-wide clean-up event and felt strongly about reviving run-down and/or vacant businesses to be replaced with new businesses The community loves their green spaces and would like to see more community activities taking place in these spaces The community is in support of enhancing the Fort Road area and increasing dialogue with EPS to address safety concerns The majority of participants supported the vision statement and 9 community members signed up to be a part of a project team

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
May 14, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Discussion #7 Belvedere Community League (10:00 a.m.)	The second meeting with this group helped to REFINE the Revitalization vision statement and provide feedback towards the identified priorities	11 attendees focused discussion (drop-in) for Seniors The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	The group identified they would like to see safety included somewhere in the vision statement and that they would like it to be more unique to the neighbourhood The group mentioned they would like to work in conjunction with rezoning to ensure any changes do not interfere with Revitalization
May 14, 2019 Listen and Learn Opportunity #4 The Gathering Place (11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)	The group helped to ADVISE on their experiences within the neighbourhood	8 participants from The Gathering Place, COE Revitalization Coordinator, Community Development Social Worker, Revitalization Summer student	There is an interest from the members at the Gathering Place to participate in community events/initiatives. There is a need for more opportunities to volunteer in the community. There is a sense of safety in attending programming at the Gathering Place. It is a welcoming space for all.

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
May 14, 2019 – Community Working Group meeting #6 Balwin Community League (5:30 – 8:30 p.m.)	Reviewing drop-in #2 and looking towards the implementation plan for the identified projects An update on focused neighbourhood discussions	The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	The group felt that safety and/ or security should be referenced in the vision after hearing clearly from the focused neighbourhood discussions that this was a priority The group felt that it would be beneficial to have two clean-up events; one in spring and one in fall They would like to see other events in conjunction with the food truck event and reinforced the need for better communications/awareness in the community The Working Group had concerns about the clean-up of derelict buildings being out of scope for Revitalization Station Pointe was well received at the drop-in and a number of potential projects to collaborate on were identified
May 15, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Conversation #8 Trinity Christian Reformed Church (10:00 – 11:30 a.m.)	The meeting with this group helped to REFINE and provide feedback towards the identified priorities	10 Youth, The Working Group, Staff from Trinity Christian Reformed Church, COE Revitalization Coordinator, and ZGM	Focused Neighbourhood Discussions are providing constructive feedback and a consensus of support – the youth community's biggest concern is safety The group advised that the clean-up events should be fun and could offer volunteer hours to youth in specific programs The group mentioned the Food Truck Event should be paired with sports, games, and contests

DATE AND LOCATION	ENGAGEMENT/ STEPS	PARTICIPANTS	OUTCOME
May 23, 2019 Focused Neighbourhood Conversation #9 Landlord and Tenant Board (1:00 – 2:30 p.m.)	The meeting with this group helped to REFINE the Revitalization vision statement and provide feedback towards the identified priorities	7 attendees including business owners/ operators, The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator, ZGM	The group supports adding safety to the vision statement as it is an issue in the area The group is in support of a clean-up initiative and mentioned the Hollyburn Towers as a place to promote this via bulletin board The group supports the food truck event and suggested using the space for cultural events, games, performances, etc. The group suggested the creation of a Facebook page for Balwin and Belvedere to help enhance community connections
June 19, 2019 Community Working Group meeting #7 Trinity Christian Reformed Church (5:30 - 8:30 p.m.)	Wrap-up meeting. Acknowledgements and recognition for the contribution of members over the last 10 months	The Working Group, COE Revitalization Coordinator and ZGM	Information sharing on the timeline of what's coming up next Document writing for the What We Heard Report, strategy document and plan for presentation to Public and Community Services Committee. Shared and collected ideas on the implementation structure for the governance of the Revitalization work in the neighbourhoods

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Revitalization Coordinator – Balwin and Belvedere
Neighbourhood Services,
Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch

balwinbelvederevitalization@edmonton.ca

Citizen Services
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