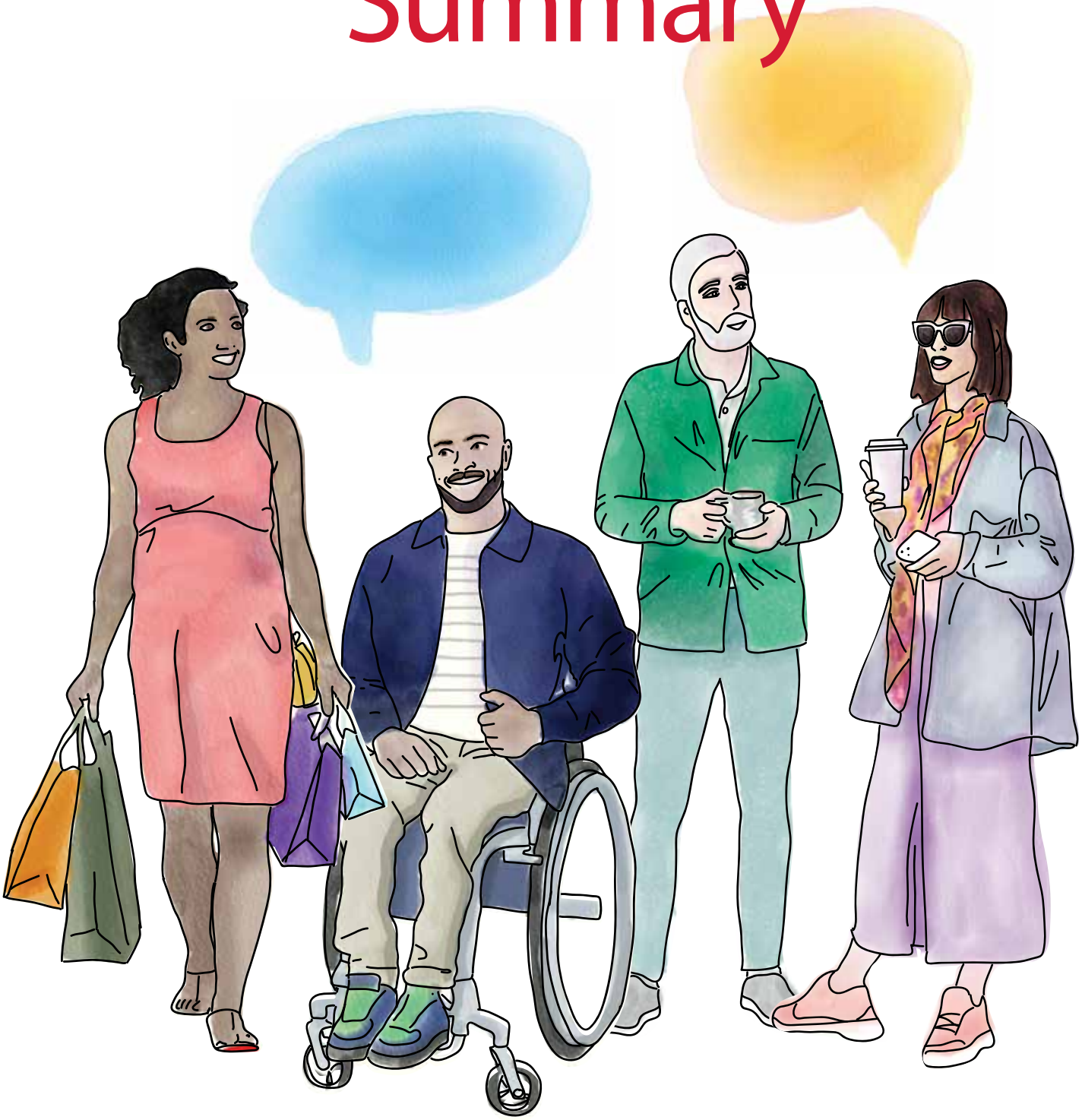
Calgary

Local Area Plan Reconnect

Engagement Summary



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Engagement Guiding Principles and Focus of Engagement

In May 2024, Council approved citywide rezoning amendments to allow for single-detached, semi-detached, townhomes and rowhouses in communities across Calgary. Existing approved local area plans (North Hill Communities, Westbrook Communities and Heritage Communities) align with this decision and several policies were removed as a result.

As part of this work, Council also directed Administration to re-engage with communities with approved local area plans to discuss and collect feedback on additional community improvements which will further support these communities as they experience growth and change.

The Local Area Plan Reconnect efforts focused on connecting with community members and community association representatives in-person and online to share information, answer questions and collect feedback. Specifically, community members had the opportunity to:

- Learn about updates being made to their local area plan to ensure alignment with the recent Council-approved citywide rezoning to allow for single-detached homes, semi-detached homes, townhomes and rowhomes across Calgary.
- Review the community improvements outlined in Chapter 3 and Appendix A of local area plans and provide feedback on additional new ideas for community improvements.
- Provide additional comments or questions about their local area plan.

The vast majority of feedback received during the Local Area Plan Reconnect engagement related to community improvements and investment opportunities were already included in each respective approved Plan, which indicates that engagement during the initial development of each local area plan remains reflective of communities' ideas around community improvements and investment opportunities. This was expected, given that the North Hill, Westbrook and Heritage Communities LAPs are all less than two years old, and significant engagement was undertaken during their initial development.

New ideas that were submitted were reviewed internally for feasibility and scope, and if appropriate, included in Chapter 3 or Appendix A of the applicable Plan.

When planning the engagement process, needs of participants were considered throughout and the project team removed as many barriers to participation as possible. Effort was made to ensure public engagement was accessible to all, despite potential limitations that might prevent them from being included in the process. One key objective was to ensure that at the very least, people within the Plan area were aware of the opportunity to participate and understood we were interested in hearing from them. Another key objective was to ensure topics being discussed and opportunities for involvement were presented and discussed in ways that were clear, understandable and inviting, and the project team open, honest and transparent in all conversations.

Transparency and an open process was demonstrated through clear reporting and connecting the dots between the input that was provided and how it was considered as decisions were made through the process. What We Heard reports share verbatim feedback and themes were created and shared following engagement. What We Did reports were also created for each local area plan that was part of the Local Area Plan Reconnect which outlined how the project team considered and responded to each of the key themes.

Highlights: **Public Participation**

From September 16 to October 6, 2024, Administration reconnected with the North Hill, Westbrook and Heritage Communities to share information about updates that were made to the local area plans and collected ideas for additional community improvements.

3 community association board **sessions**

1 **phase** of public participation

3 in-person engagement **sessions**

29 **Curbex signs** within the three Plan areas

1K+ **contributions** submitted

21 days of **online engagement**

44K+ **postcards** mailed

2K+ instances of **involvement**

489 instances of **direct engagement participation**

Opportunities for Involvement

A variety of opportunities for involvement were available through the process that aimed to accommodate a range of participation interest and intensities (medium, low) and remove a range of barriers to participation (time, understanding, trust, audio/visual, mobility, internet, language, etc.).

Public In-Person Engagement Sessions

In-person public sessions were offered for the Local Area Plan Reconnect project. The in-person Community Conversations allowed members of the public to register for 50 minute slots to review information, ask questions of the project team and provide input.

Virtual Community Association Board Engagement Sessions

Virtual sessions were held on Microsoft Teams and were offered to all community association board members within each Plan area.

Mailed Postcards

More than 44,000 postcards were mailed to households and businesses within the three Plan areas to ensure people were aware of the project, and had a point of reference to go to for information about the project and changes being made to the Plans, upcoming public engagement sessions as well as the online Engage portal.

Online Engagement

Online engagement at calgary.ca/LAPreconnect was available from Sept. 16 to Oct. 6, 2024. Within this timeframe, two questions were asked, one about new community improvement ideas and the second asked if there were any additional questions or comments about their local area plan. Online engagement provided people with a quick and easily accessible opportunity to get involved.

"Thoughtful planning that doesn't just consider the immediate need to build more housing. Think: choice of commute (bike,walk,transit) green spaces, dog parks, multi use structures (residential/commercial)."

— Participant

Building Awareness

Tools used to build awareness of the project and opportunities to get involved included:

- Twenty-nine large format (Curbex) signs placed throughout the communities and at high-traffic intersections.
- Councillor and Community Association updates.
- Mailed postcards to residences and businesses in the Plan areas.
- Email newsletter updates through the North Hill, Westbrook and Heritage Communities subscriber list.
- Communications toolkits provided to Ward Councillors to make it easy to help spread the word through their established communications channels and networks.

"I think a community by community portal to show what's being done for improvements. This is too large an area and I think you do yourself a disservice by not having a comms hub and being able to show the community at a micro level what you're actually doing."

— Participant

Engagement Timeline

Local Area Plan Reconnect

- Sep. 9, 2024 — **Postcards mailed to residences and businesses within all three Plan areas**
- Sep. 16, 2024 — **Online engagement open for feedback**
- Sep. 23, 2024 — **Heritage Communities Conversation Series (in-person)**
- Sep. 25, 2024 — **Westbrook Communities Conversation Series (in-person)**
- Oct. 3, 2024 — **North Hill Communities Conversation Series (in-person)**
- Oct. 8, 2024 — **North Hill Communities Community Association Board Session (virtual)**
- Oct. 9, 2024 — **Westbrook Communities Community Association Board Session (virtual)**
- Oct. 16, 2024 — **Heritage Communities Community Association Board Session (virtual)**

Key Themes and Key Changes Made

It is important to note that many of the themes that we heard during the Local Area Plan Reconnect opportunities across all three of the approved Local Area Plans reflect what is currently in the approved North Hill Communities Local Area Plan, Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan and Heritage Communities Local Area Plan.

North Hill Communities

Key Themes

- Participants expressed a desire to maintain community feel and invest in supporting heritage guidelines.
- Participants sought improvements and protection of park spaces, playgrounds and investment into the tree canopy within the Plan area.
- Participants shared interest in improvements to pedestrian infrastructure and accessibility to transit within the Plan area.
- Participants shared interest in the investment and revitalization of public and commercial spaces.
- Participants shared interest in the investment and maintenance of parks, playgrounds and tree canopy.
- Participants want safety within the Plan area addressed, primarily focusing on pedestrian safety.
- Participants highlighted parking and traffic issues specifically noting a desire for traffic calming and increased parking with developments to alleviate current problems.
- Participants emphasized concerns and questions about the development process.
- Participants shared concerns and appreciation for engagement with some questioning if their input is being heard and others in favour of in-person opportunities.
- Participants shared questions and concerns about decision making and implementation of local area plans.

Key Changes Made

Key changes made to the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan based on community improvement feedback include:

- Explore opportunities for more tree planting within Confederation Park.
- Complete missing links for pedestrians by installing sidewalks where they currently do not exist.
- Explore opportunities to upgrade the park at 4307 Edmonton Trail NE with upgraded park amenities.
- Explore 5A improvements along 8 Avenue N between 2 Street NW to Deerfoot Trail N, and 20 Avenue between 19 Street NW to 4 Street NE.
- Explore improvements to the 5A network along 10 Street NW, in addition to 4 Street NW, north of 40 Avenue NW.
- Explore traffic calming along 32 Avenue NE.
- Explore the feasibility of a new pedestrian and bike bridge east of 32 Avenue NE over the Nose Creek Pathway.

Westbrook Communities

Key Themes

- Participants expressed concerns about safety and crime in the Plan area with participants noting traffic safety, homelessness, and petty crime as issues.
- Participants shared a desire for improvements around Westbrook LRT station.
- Participants shared concerns with the Rezoning for Housing decision and its potential future impact in the Plan area.
- Participants expressed an interest in increased traffic calming measures with a focus on pedestrian safety.
- Participants highlighted the need for the protection of tree canopy and investment into parks and green spaces.
- Participants desire investment and improvements around Westbrook LRT station.
- Participants asked questions about housing affordability within the Plan area and related impact of the Rezoning for Housing decision.
- Participants expressed concerns about developers and the development process.
- Participants shared frustration and support for the Rezoning for Housing decision with comments noting impact on the engagement process.
- Participants highlighted a lack of faith in engagement process after the Rezoning for Housing decision.

Key Changes Made

Key changes made to the Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan based on community improvement feedback include:

- Explore upgrades to the open space at the intersection of 8 Avenue SW and 40 Street SW to create a park space.
- Explore opportunities for additional off-leash areas within the Plan area.
- Provide an off-street pedestrian and wheeling connection from Spruce Drive SW to Edworthy Park.

Heritage Communities

Key Themes

- Participants expressed a desire for improvements to pedestrian pathways and bike lanes where safety for pedestrians and general maintenance of pedestrian infrastructure were highlighted.
- Participants shared a need for investment, maintenance and protection of parks and green spaces within the communities.
- Participants shared concerns about infrastructure with increased density mostly related to utilities as well as parking.
- Participants highlighted traffic concerns with requests for increased transit services, traffic calming and other safety measures to be implemented.
- Participants shared safety concerns with mentions of safety around transit stations and for cyclists.
- Participants expressed concerns with the Rezoning for Housing decision with participants sharing frustration and disagreement with the decision.
- Participants shared issues with decision making and trust where some noted concerns with their input not being heard and their time previously spent not being respected.
- Participants shared about communication and engagement where participants both shared lack of faith in the outcome of engagement and appreciation for engagement efforts.
- Participants expressed concerns and shared suggestions about parking availability with increased density.
- Participants asked questions related to the development process and desire for clear information on future developments in their communities.

Key Changes Made

Key changes made to the North Hill Communities Local Area Plan based on community improvement feedback include:

- Prioritize access to transit stations through safe and convenient transit, walking and wheeling, and barrier-free connections.
- Provide upgrades to Kingsland Park.
- Explore pedestrian and wheeling upgrades to the underpass of 78 Avenue S and Macleod Trail S for greater east-west connectivity.

"I am pleased that we are trying to accelerate development. Need to work as a city and community to develop the community at a quicker pace and allow developers to quickly build to densify the areas around main routes (16th Avenue, Centre Street, Edmonton Trail)."

— *Participant*

"We need to be cognizant of the added traffic that community improvements will bring and ensure the properly infrastructure is in place and impact to home owners/residents need to be considered."

— *Participant*

"Beautified public realm on main streets: benches, greenery, community signage/pageantry, pedestrian lighting, public art, ambient lighting."

— *Participant*

"Covid should have taught us that space is important and we need some private green space. Developers need to put trees back. If they remove a tree during construction they need to be legislated to be replaced within the community, not in Sandy Park or another place outside of where the original tree was. Our community trees are part of the city canopy and they should be protected."

— *Participant*

What We Heard and What We Did Reports

The original local area plans were informed by input provided by thousands of participants over multiple phases and multiple years. They set the vision for the next 30+ years – providing direction on future development and investment that residents, landowners, builders/ developers, City Planners and Council can commonly refer to as new development and investment ideas are proposed.

Local area plans are intended to be updated over time to respond to the changing needs of the communities. The Local Area Plan Reconnect shared information about changes being made to the local area plans as result of Council's Rezoning for Housing decision and engaged on potential new community improvements to help support future growth and change.

For more detailed information about the project's feedback or to learn more about the Local Area Plan Reconnect, please review the What We Heard and What We Did reports for each local area plan.

Local Area Plan Reconnect Heritage What We Heard Report

Local Area Plan Reconnect North Hill What We Heard Report

Local Area Plan Reconnect Westbrook What We Heard Report