

Building Housing Choices: Keheewin Phase 1 Public Involvement What We Heard

Executive Summary

A total of 137 people attended the October 26, 2015 Community Conversation in Keheewin to learn about and discuss the future Building Housing Choices development on the undeveloped building site (former surplus school site) in the neighbourhood. Sixty-one comment forms were submitted either at the event or online.

About Keheewin

What Residents Value about Keheewin

- Proximity/Location
- Sense of Community
- Green/Open Space

About the Development

Perceived Impact of Future Building Housing Choices Development on Keheewin

- 68% Negative
- 9% Positive
- 23% Don't Know

Negative Impacts

- Traffic congestion/parking
- Safety concerns/increase in crime
- Decrease in property values

Positive Impacts

- Increase in affordable housing options
- Allow seniors to stay in community

Building Type Underserved in Keheewin

- Seniors (52%)
- Young Families (18%)
- Empty Nesters (10%)

Awareness/About the Event

- Aware of the Building Housing Choices development before the event – 59%
- Information provided helped understanding of affordable housing shortage – 38%
- Information provided helped understanding of City Council policy on Surplus School Sites – 51%

- Information provided helped understanding of new development to include mix of affordable and market housing – 46%
- Information provided helped understanding of what aspects of the development the public could influence – 54%
- The event was useful and informative – 54% Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree
- The visual displays were easy to understand – 58% Agree or Somewhat Agree
- Staff were helpful, friendly and available to talk to participants – 57% Agree or Somewhat Agree

Community Conversation

A public event titled A Community Conversation was held in Keheewin on October 26, 2015 as an official introduction of the Building Housing Choices program in the Keheewin community and a kick off to a three-phase public involvement process. The goal is to work with the community determine a concept for a future housing development on the undeveloped building site (former surplus school site) in the neighbourhood.

The event shared information about the City's housing issues and affordable housing challenges, as well as details about the Building Housing Choices program in Keheewin and the public involvement process. Information was shared through static display panels, a project fact sheet, interaction with project team members and a slide presentation delivered by the Executive Director of Housing and Homelessness followed by a moderated question and answer session.

A total of 137 people attended the event.

How Information Was Collected

Comments from the public were collected through comment forms, available both at the event and online on the City's project webpage, as well as on two idea walls posted at the event.

Sixty-one (61) comment forms were submitted. Thirty-seven (37) were received at the event and 24 were completed online.

Comments were also received on two idea walls at the Community Conversation that asked attendees to complete two statements:

Statement #1: What I like most about Keheewin is...

Statement #2: The Building Housing Choices development will change my community by...

What We Heard Overall

Overall, respondents value Keheewin for its location and proximity to a variety of amenities and services, including transit, as well as the transportation network. They also like the sense of community (meaning their relationships with their neighbours) and the general feeling of the neighbourhood referring to it as walkable, quiet, friendly and quality. The amount of green and open space is also highly valued, as well as the feeling of safety, together with the low crime rate.

Although a significant portion of respondents don't know how the Building Housing Choices development will impact the community, the majority of respondents (68%) feel it will be negative and are concerned that it will bring increased traffic, adding to the overall congestion in the area and impacting the already limited on-street parking, especially near the green space/sports fields. There is concern about how the development will impact property values, anticipating they will decline as a result. There are also fears about safety, increased density and the loss of green space and sports fields.

The small number of respondents (9%) who believe there will be a positive impact to the community cite the increase in affordable housing options, and the potential for seniors housing in Keheewin so area seniors have

the opportunity to age in place. Twenty-three (23) percent of respondents indicated they do not know if the development will have a positive or negative impact.

Just over half (52%) of the respondents feel the housing type currently underserved in Keheewin is seniors.

Comment Form Summary

Eighty-seven (87) percent or 53 respondents who completed the comment form are residents of Keheewin with 13 percent or eight (8) respondents from other communities including: Bearspaw, Blue Quill, Clareview, Millwoods, Ogilvie Ridge, Pleasantview, and Westmount.

Respondents that completed the comment form and who live in Keheewin have lived there for the following number of years:

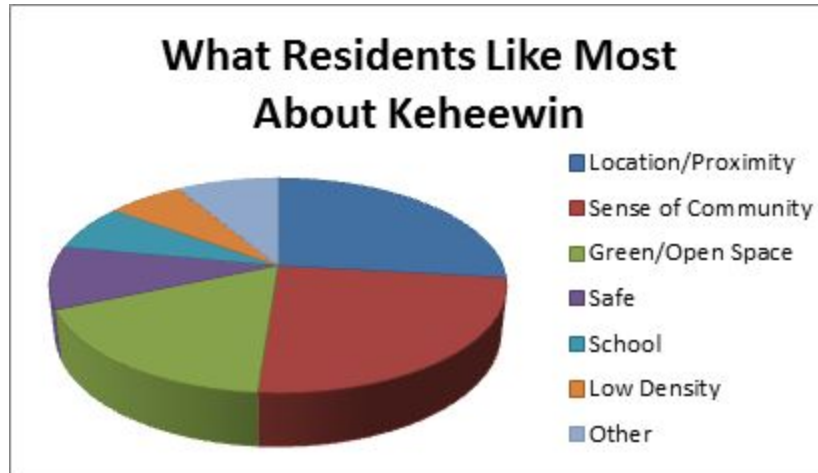
- Less than 1 year – 0%
- 1 – 5 years – 5 people or 9%
- 6 – 10 years – 9 people or 17%
- 11 – 20 years – 11 people or 21 %
- 21+ years – 28 people or 53%

Note for review of the summary of responses: not all respondents answered every question.

Respondents vary in age with 21 percent over 66 years of age (13 respondents), 23 percent between 56 and 65 years of age (14 respondents), 21 percent between 46 and 55 years of age (13 responses), 20 percent between 36 and 45 (12 respondents), 10 percent between 26 and 35 years of age (six respondents) and 3% between 18 and 25 (2 respondents).

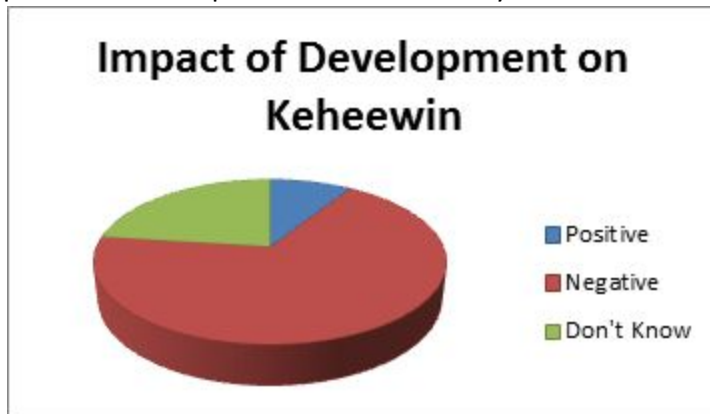
What Respondents Like About Keheewin

Respondents were asked what they like most about Keheewin and the response received most often was location—the community’s close proximity to shopping, downtown, transit, etc. (34 responses). Other key elements that respondents like about Keheewin include the overall community environment/sense of community (31 responses), describing it as ‘close knit’, ‘friendly’, ‘quiet’, ‘quality’, and ‘walkable’, and where we ‘know the names of almost all our neighbours’. The community’s green and open spaces (22 responses) was cited as another reason to like Keheewin, with other responses as follows: safe (12 responses), a good community school (9 responses), low density (8 responses), well maintained/pride of ownership (5 responses), sports fields (4 responses), and lot size (2 responses).



“Love the well-groomed homes, as well as the good friendly neighbours.”

When asked if the new Building Housing Choices development will affect the Keheewin community positively or negatively, 68 percent or 36 respondents indicated it would affect the community negatively, while nine (9) percent or 5 respondents believe it will have a positive impact on the neighbourhood. Twenty-three (23) percent or 12 respondents indicated they don't know if the impact will be positive or negative.

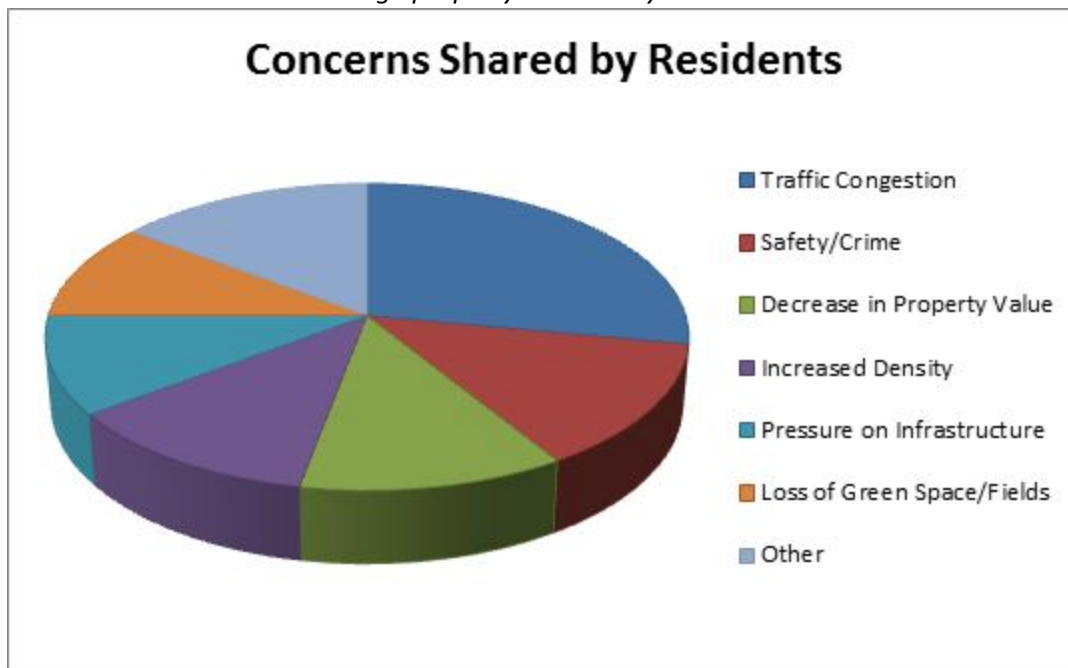


Those that feel the housing development will have a negative impact indicated most often that were concerned about the traffic congestion (19 responses) that will result from the development and that the 'proposed location is already overburdened with traffic'. Other locations mentioned for concern about increased traffic include the school zone, 23 Avenue, 105 Street, Calgary Trail/Gateway Boulevard, 109 Street and 19 Avenue. In addition to increased traffic, some suggested that parking (7 responses) would be an issue as 'curb parking is already taxed'.

“It is a main entrance route to the community that will become further congested with an increase in residents on the street. Especially during school traffic peaks, and during sporting events where parking is already a major issue.”

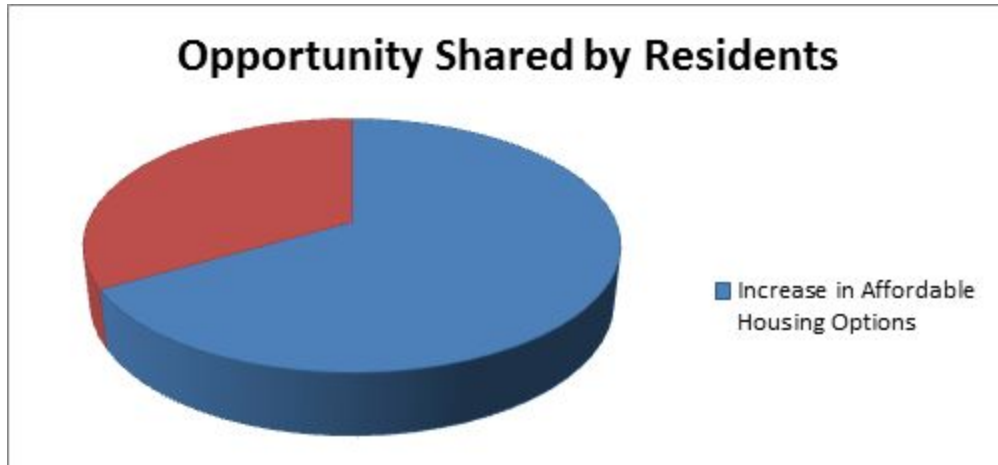
Other key areas of perceived negative impact were safety concerns/increased crime (9 responses), decrease in property values (8 responses), additional pressure on already taxed infrastructure (including water and sewer systems) (7 responses), the overall impacts of increased population and density (8 responses) and the loss of green space (6 responses). Additional comments included impacts on the community spirit and pride in ownership, increased noise, concerns about poor property management and maintenance, pressure on the Keheewin School by removing the play area, impacts by the loss of the sports fields, and an overall decreased quality of life.

“Average property values may decrease.”



Those who feel that the development would have a positive impact on the neighbourhood suggested that it would increase the affordable housing options (4 responses) in both the community and the city, and allow seniors to stay in the community (2 responses).

“Affordable options; allows seniors to stay in this community.”



When asked what one message respondents would like to share with the City about the Building Housing Choices development, responses that reiterated concerns and issues already identified included: concern that property values will decrease, traffic congestion, loss of green space, increased noise, safety and security, the need to ensure appropriate property maintenance and management, and additional pressure on the community's infrastructure.

Additional comments (4 responses) were received that questioned the need for more housing developments in the neighbourhood, citing that a First Place development has already been located in Keheewin and that another housing development is not necessary/welcomed (4 responses). Other comments provided suggestions about the process including 'involve the community', 'plan, plan, plan', and 'listen carefully to the residents of the area'.

Three (3) comments were received that support affordable housing in the community with four (4) received that were unsupportive of affordable housing, although one respondent noted that affordable *seniors'* housing would be acceptable. Nine (9) other respondents agreed that seniors' housing could or would be supported.

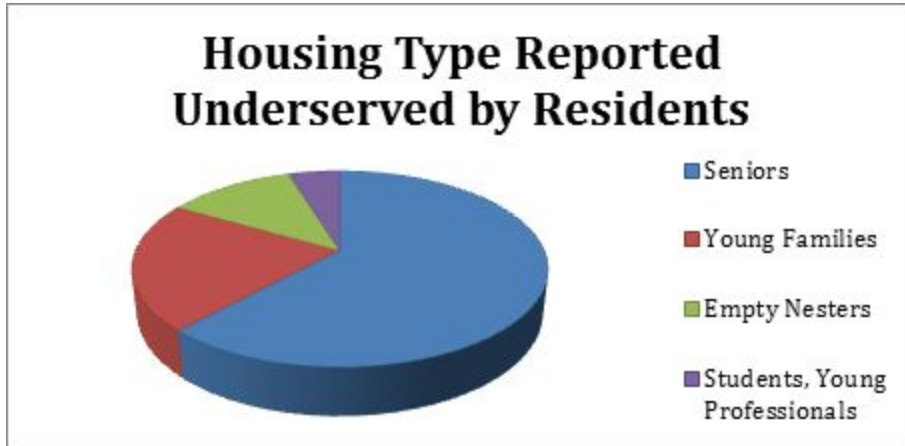
"Build a seniors complex as soon as possible."

Respondents also offered suggestions including 'keep it small, I would like to see town homes (if you must) rather than an apartment,' 'development needs to fit in architecturally', 'a smaller number of units would be best', and 'give a priority to low income housing'.

"Build the houses but not many of them as it will create even more problems with traffic and congestion."

When asked what housing type would be most needed in the Keheewin community, seniors was indicated by 52 percent or 26 respondents as the number one choice and by 22 percent (11 respondents) as the second choice.

Families with small children were favoured by 18 percent or 9 respondents, empty nesters by 10 percent (5 respondents) and young couples by 4 percent (2 respondents).



Awareness

Before the October 26, 2015 Community Conversation, 10 percent or 16 respondents indicated they were unaware of the future housing development in Keheewin, 59 percent or 36 respondents indicated they were aware but uncertain as to what kind, 23 percent or 14 respondents indicated they were aware and knowledgeable that a housing development was being planned in their community. One respondent did not answer the question.

Respondents were also asked if the information presented at the October 26, 2015 Community Conversation helped their understanding of the Building Housing Choices project. Thirty-eight (38) percent of 23 respondents indicated attending the event helped their understanding of the affordable housing shortage in Edmonton, 51 percent (31 respondents) indicated attending the event helped their understanding of the City Council approved policy to guide residential development on the 17 undeveloped (surplus school) sites, 46 percent (28 respondents) indicate they became more aware of the Building Housing Choices goal of developing a mix of market and affordable housing on the undeveloped (surplus school) site and 54 percent or 33 respondents became more aware of which aspects of the development the public will have the opportunity to influence. Six respondents did not answer the question.

About the Event

In terms of their level of satisfaction with the Community Conversation event, 54 percent (33 respondents) Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree that the information presented was useful and informative, with 12 percent (7 respondents) who Strongly Disagree or Somewhat Disagree with the statement and 20 percent (12 respondents) who Neither Agree nor Disagree.

Fifty eight (58) percent (35 respondents) Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree that the visual displays in the room were easy to understand, with five percent (3 respondents) who Strongly Disagree or Somewhat Disagree, and 25 percent (15 respondents) who Neither Agree nor Disagree.

Fifty-seven (57) percent (35 respondents) Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree that staff were helpful, friendly and available to talk with participants with seven (7) percent or four (4) respondents who Strongly Disagree or Somewhat Disagree and 23 percent (14 respondents) who Neither Agree nor Disagree. Thirty (30) percent (18 respondents) Neither Agree nor Disagree that they were able to find answers to their questions, with 20 percent or 12 respondents who Strongly Disagree or Somewhat Disagree and 39 percent (24 respondents) who Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree.

The top three methods that respondents indicate is how they learned about the October 26, 2015 Community Conversation were roadside signs (51%), the Building Housing Choices direct mail postcard delivered to resident mailboxes (41%), and the four page Building Housing Choices Community Bulletin delivered to resident mailboxes (31%).

Idea Wall

Those who attended the Community Conversation were invited to share comments on two idea walls that were displayed in the room. On the first idea wall they were asked to complete the statement - **What I like most about Keheewin is...** On the second idea wall, attendees were asked to complete the following statement - **The Building Housing Choices development will change my community by. . . .**

Comments received on the two Idea Walls are summarized below.

Statement #1: What I like most about Keheewin is...

The comments are generally consistent with those received on the comment forms. The comments received most frequently include green/open space (7 comments) and the sense of community in Keheewin (8 responses). Other comments include location/proximity (2), safe/low crime (2), quiet (3), and low density (2).

Statement #2: The Building Housing Choices development will change my community by. . . .

The majority of respondents feel that the development will bring additional traffic to the neighbourhood, increasing congestion (10 comments) in an area that is already busy. On-street parking (6 responses) was indicated as a key issue, as well as safety/increase in crime (4 comments), a decrease in property values (2 comments) and a loss of green space (4 comments).

Positive responses focused on providing affordable housing to those in need (3 comments), creating affordable housing for seniors (2 comments), as well as others including potential to add more cultural diversity (1), 'may help fill the school', and one commenter who suggested that he/she didn't think there will really be much change.