

West 240 Engagement Resource Guide

ACCESS DIGITAL GUIDE ONLINE



Created by the SCNC
South Campus Neighbourhood Coalition
Lansdowne | June 2023

Being involved in a public consultation process can be difficult for residents, and the West 240 engagement is no exception. Oftentimes the issues at hand have serious implications, which can cause anxiety and anger.

It is important to be mindful that public consultation is an opportunity for your voice to be heard.

The SCNC encourages residents to use these opportunities to do exactly that: be heard. This Guide will help you magnify your voice to effectively provide feedback with the greatest impact.

This Engagement Resource Guide includes

- 1 **General engagement tips**
- 2 **Notes to consider when writing feedback on the West 240 development**
- 3 **A description of the various stakeholders involved in this process**
- 4 **Some concerns raised by development concepts**
- 5 **Who to contact with your feedback**

1 General Engagement Tips Maximize your impact in the consultation process

- i) Be respectful:** Nobody responds well to being shouted at or treated with disrespect, and this is no different in a consultation process. Try your best to remain calm when explaining your questions, concerns, or opinions. It is okay to identify that the situation makes you angry, for example, but don't take that anger out on the people that are there to hear you. Confrontation and rudeness will detract from your message, so be confident, clear, and persistent instead.
- ii) Show up:** Attend every event you can and always fill in comment sheets when given the chance. If you can't attend, write down your comments and send them by email or letter to the project contact. During consultation, volume matters, so don't assume they already know about your issue and decide not to come or neglect to submit comments. If you have a question, concern, or comment, present it at every available opportunity.
- iii) Be specific:** Specific comments are more effective, so be specific wherever you can. For example, "I want to keep the trees on the south property line because they provide shade and places for birds to nest" is much clearer, stronger, and more actionable than "Keep the trees!"

- iv) Ask for more:** Don't hesitate to ask for follow-up or changes if you don't see/get what you need from a consultation. You can ask the project team to follow up with you on a question they might not readily have an answer for at a consultation event. Similarly, if something wasn't addressed that you thought should've been, ask for it, preferably in writing. You can also request further consultations, or a different format, if you felt the process you experienced didn't provide you the opportunity to be heard.

In addition to these tips, you can follow the below link to an info sheet the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) provides on how to present to Council. Some of these tips are also applicable to consultation processes.

[EFCL.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2023/03/
HOW-TO-SPEAK-AT-CITY-COUNCIL.PDF](https://www.efcl.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/how-to-speak-at-city-council.pdf)

2 Notes to consider when writing feedback on the West 240 development

i) Accept that development is happening in the West 240 and focus on how your voice can help guide the development with specific feedback about the design concepts.

One of the most important messages that we can send at this stage is that we want to see GOOD development – development that is right for the site, the area, the University’s reputation, and the city in general. Stating specifically how the proposed design concepts did not showcase said development is impactful.

ii) Do not make your letters too lengthy. Short and to-the-point letters – and multiple, if needed – are preferable. Give an intro, general impression statement, and then right into detailed asks with rationale for your concerns.

iii) Examples of detailed asks/rationale may look like this:

a) I want the following changes to Concepts A & B: Add retention of the south tree line to protect a mature tree stand, provide pedestrian access, respect neighbouring properties, and maintain habitat connection to the creek.

b) I have a concern over the development backing onto the ravine in Concepts A & B: It isn’t consistent with the neighbouring communities of Lansdowne and Grandview, which both have a full top-of-bank roadway, which allows maximum public and wildlife access; and that pattern should continue in this middle site. Not only does top-of-bank roadway fit the neighbouring pattern of development and provide maximum access, but the soils here are also not the most stable from historic coal mining and erosion of the creek bank, and this would protect the City and future homeowners from slope instability issues.

c) I have concerns that current environmental features in the site were ignored: This site has significant natural features that were strongly valued by the public in their feedback after Consultation 1 but were not reflected at all in the Consultation 2 design concepts.

iv) One of the Engagement Boards presented at the June open house included “What They Heard” during the first engagement. Clearly, the concepts presented did NOT take this into account. When giving feedback, consider citing this board as a reason for your suggestions. The UAPT gives four themes, so hold them to these.

“We would like retention of the stand of mature trees in the south, as you heard in the first engagement when you said you would ‘consider green buffers and incorporate existing, natural features into the new development.’”

v) The current concepts do not focus on respecting nature or the neighbouring communities in their design.

Consider that the University has a reputation for being innovative and wants to listen to their Alumni. If you are an Alumni, mention this is your communication. *“These designs are very traditional and showed very little innovation, such as urban agriculture, a central park space with greenways connections, et cetera.”* Mention this in regards to the University and the opportunity they have here to showcase innovation and forward thinking. *“We don’t see forward thinking and innovations with these designs for these reasons...”*

vi) At the engagement meeting, the developers mentioned many times, when pushed about the lack of green space in the concepts, that they were adhering to the required minimum 10% green space for City development and no more.

Consider that they could be utilizing this 10% so much better. Current designs have the required 10% green space in out-of-the-way, isolated areas. Instead, it could be connected to the creek, along the borders of the neighbourhoods, et cetera. They also can’t build on the pipeline land (which wasn’t clearly shown in the designs), and the drainage pond is also not a part of this minimum 10%. So consider asking about better utilization of the “10% green space.”

vii) Consider that the only wetland area they show on the map is a drainage pond that shows houses surrounding it. How is this wildlife friendly?

The environment is very important on this site, as this is an urban wildlife corridor and a migratory bird site in the middle of a city. The current design concepts show nothing to incorporate or respect the very important role this land plays.

viii) Mention Environmental Reserve (ER), which would be used for wetlands that they don’t show in their designs.

To not incorporate them, they’d have to pay compensation to Alberta Environment, which makes little economic sense. This is a good question to ask the developers and the City. It is a strong point when you can connect the environment and the economics of the site as well.

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We are currently still in the midst of the engagement period, and refinements to the preferred concepts leading to the Master Plan will be made over the coming months.

Now is the opportunity for each and every concerned resident to make their voice heard.

- iv) When communicating with your City councillor and EFCL planning advisor, inquire how the City could be more involved already, including more park space, handling of urban wildlife corridors, handling of a migratory wetland area for geese and other birds.** Mention concerns over traffic, congestion, urban wildlife, et cetera, and that all studies are proposed to take place in the summer, which may not give a complete picture of the area.
- v) These designs are just beginning concepts.** It is worth asking about their guiding principles moving forward in regards to solar, geothermal, et cetera, to already have these ideas in writing as well.
- vi) Another note to consider is that the location of the engagement open house was problematic.** There is limited parking and access to transit at the Alfred H. Savage Centre, which may hinder participation from all residents. State any concerns you may have with the process of engagement thus far, as this can demonstrate bad faith in the engagement process. Ignoring the first engagement priorities in their design concepts and having a troublesome meeting location can be a big deal to the City when they look at the application.

3 *A description of the various stakeholders involved in this process*

- i) Lansdowne Community League (LCL):**
A community league's role is to provide information, resources, and opportunity to its residents so that they can provide effective, meaningful feedback.
- ii) South Campus Neighbourhood Coalition (SCNC):**
Works in conjunction with Lansdowne Community League and seven other neighbouring communities. It was formed specifically to improve the ability of neighbourhoods adjacent to South Campus to effectively consult with and provide community feedback to the University of Alberta. SCNC's priority is the successful integration of South Campus developments into our communities through mutually beneficial and compatible land uses and developments.
- iii) City Councillor:**
A city councillor can hold projects accountable for alignment with City policy and strategy and can bring forward the voices and concerns of their constituents.
- iv) Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) Planning Advisor:**
A City of Edmonton Community League staff dedicated to helping neighbourhoods through developments. Through collaboration with the City and other organizations, the EFCL creates resources, training, and information to help leagues and communities advocate for their neighbourhoods. Our current EFCL Planning Advisor is Jonathan Lawrence.
- v) University of Alberta Properties Trust (UAPT):**
UAPT is an arm's length, independent, incorporated trust, with the University of Alberta as its sole shareholder. It is a trust formed by the University of Alberta to develop or redevelop lands deemed by the University as not central to its academic mission of teaching and research. Such developments are to distribute net revenues back to the University of Alberta, contributing to its long-term sustainability. UAPT reports to a Board of Directors from the University.
- vi) Developer B&A Planning:**
In conjunction with their client (UAPT), B&A will design a concept of development for the West 240 lands.
- vii) Lansdowne Residents:**
Be proactive, engaged, and let your voice be heard.

More information can be found at this link:

[EFCL.ORG/PLANNING-DEVELOPMENT/](https://www.edmonton.ca/efcl/PLANNING-DEVELOPMENT/)

4 Some concerns raised by the current development concepts

i) No green space or belt between Lansdowne and the new neighbourhood.

- a) Negative effect on property values.
- b) Shared alleyway means significantly increased vehicular traffic in and out of Lansdowne to access West 240.
- c) Environmental impact, including cutting down mature trees and removing a wildlife corridor and existing wetlands.
- d) Reduced recreational space for cross-country skiing, walking access to ravine, dog walking, et cetera.

ii) Back-facing ravine lots.

- a) Loss of ravine access from public and wildlife.
- b) Slope stability issues.
- c) Not respecting and matching existing neighbourhoods' top-of-bank roadway pattern.

iii) Loss of migratory bird habitat and wildlife corridor.

- a) Use of terms such as "clear cut," "we will develop every inch of the space we can," that all existing mature trees on site are "just brush," and plans to "rip it all out."
- b) Did not incorporate any natural features currently on site.

iv) Traffic and congestion concerns.

- a) Increased traffic volume in and out of Lansdowne via shared alleyway.

- b) Increased traffic and congestion will already be brought by the Michener Park development.
- c) Will traffic clog up Grandview, Lansdowne, and 122nd Street? Can current infrastructure handle a development of such a high population?
- d) No capacity or traffic evaluations or stability of land assessments have been produced; however, a concept design has already been put forth with a high population proposal.
- e) If the plan is to do these evaluations in the summer, will this provide a complete picture?

v) Where are all the West 240 children, with this proposed population capacity, supposed to go to school?

- a) Can current schools support this population influx to the area?
- b) If not, where will these new kids be bussed to; and will the bussing be included in the traffic consultation process?

vi) Engagement has not been in good faith up to this point.

- a) Priorities and concerns that came out of the first engagement were largely ignored and not incorporated into design concepts.
- b) Location of engagement was problematic in its limited parking and access to transit, which hinders participation from all residents.

5 Who to contact with your feedback

South Campus Neighbourhood Coalition (SCNC):

We want Lansdowne residents' feedback to share with the University and to advocate for our neighbourhood. Please send or CC your letters to scnc@lansdownecommunityleague.com

University of Alberta Property Trust (UAPT):

Send all letters of engagement to feedback@west240.site

Also, complete the survey at www.west240.site

Call 1-877-816-6384 to discuss your concerns

Board of Directors:

No contact info was included specifically for the Board on UAPT's website. However, the President of the U of A, Bill Flanagan, is on the Board of Directors and can be reached at president@ualberta.ca and 780-492-3212

Developer - B&A Planning

info@bastudios.ca and 780-760-4738

City Councillor - Michael Janz

michael.janz@edmonton.ca and 780-496-8146

WEST240.SITE

