

**IDEAS FAIR**  
**Al Ritchie Neighbourhood Plan**  
**Summary Report**

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February 20, 2020

## Overview

This report provides an overview of the feedback received as part of the initial community conversation to develop Al Ritchie's first Neighbourhood Plan. This feedback will inform development of options to guide future land use and built form which will be taken to the community for consultation in the spring of 2020.

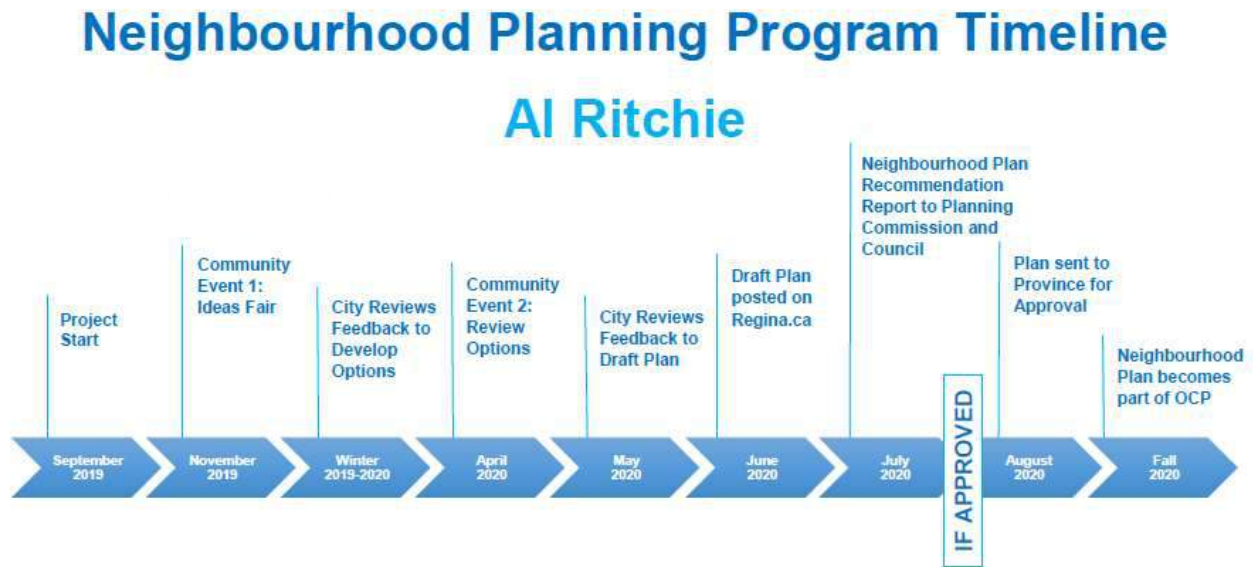
### 1. Background

In the fall of 2019, the City of Regina launched the Neighbourhood Planning process for the Al Ritchie neighbourhood. This will result in the development of Al Ritchie's first neighbourhood plan and will provide direction for where and how growth and development/redevelopment should occur within the area for the next 20 years. Neighbourhoods evolve over time, as do those who live there. How the area has been built may not meet the needs of existing and future residents. Regina's population is expected to grow to 300,000 over the next 20 years, and some of this growth will occur within established neighbourhoods. The development of Neighbourhood Plans considers how land is used, what buildings could look like, and community character.



Upon approval from City Council, Neighbourhood Plans form part of *Design Regina, the Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2013-48*. As such, it will inform development decisions while providing residents and community members with more certainty around how the neighbourhood is intended to evolve over time.

## 2. Timeline



## 3. Community Engagement for the Neighbourhood Planning Program

Neighbourhoods evolve over time, as do those who live there. How the area was originally built, and is today, may no longer meet the needs of existing and future residents. Feedback from the community helps inform current needs and perspectives in order to plan for how neighbourhoods could change to accommodate growth and development over time.

Each Neighbourhood Plan development process will involve three touchpoints with the community, as identified in the Al Ritchie timeline example above. An overview of each of these touchpoints is described briefly below.

### 1. Ideas Fair

The first community event is the Ideas Fair, a come and go community session that provides residents with opportunities to learn through visual displays and conversations and share ideas through written comments and feedback forms. This event kicks off the conversation with the community which informs the development of neighbourhood plan options. As part of this community consultation, interested parties are invited to share their feedback in person at the event itself on sticky notes, complete a Comment Sheet, or respond online.

### 2. Options Review

The second community event will review and seek feedback on the draft options to inform the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. As part of this community consultation, interested parties are invited to share their feedback in person at the event itself, complete a Comment Sheet, or respond online.

### 3. Review Recommended Neighbourhood Plan

The third touchpoint will occur as the recommended Neighbourhood Plan is posted online for review and consideration by the community prior to the Plan being taken to the Regina Planning Commission (RPC) for consideration. Community members are welcome to speak at this meeting as



a delegation. If RPC is in agreement, the Plan will proceed to City Council for consideration, where members of the community can also attend as a delegation to share their thoughts.

#### 4. About the Ideas Fair for the Al Ritchie Neighbourhood Plan

Community Associations, residents and other community members were invited to participate in the Ideas Fair.

Over a three-week period, starting November 7, 2019, notification included:

- A Public Service Announcement (PSA) sent out to media outlets;
- A mailout sent to all landowners in the area;
- Direct emails to schools in the area, the Association of Regina Realtors, Economic Development Regina, and the Regina and Region Homebuilders' Association;
- Targeted Facebook and Instagram advertisements; and
- City of Regina website.



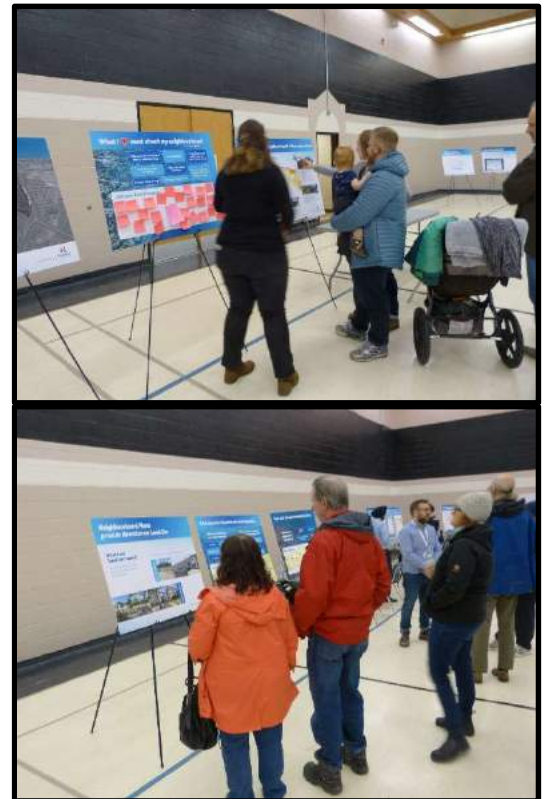
Interested residents and community members had the opportunity to learn about Neighbourhood Planning and share their thoughts in the following ways:

##### a) In-Person at the Ideas Fair

The in-person Ideas Fair was held on Thursday, November 21, 2019 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Core Ritchie Neighbourhood Centre. This come and go event invited attendees to move through stations to learn and provide feedback on their neighbourhood.

There were 86 attendees who had the opportunity to talk to City staff, provide their comments on boards using sticky notes and dots that sought feedback on:

- Where they lived;
- What they loved most about their neighbourhood;
- What they thought about the residential and commercial built form (design and character of buildings);
- What they thought about development that was already occurring in their neighbourhood; and
- What direction they wanted to see for future development in the area.



b) Comment Sheets

Comment Sheets were available to enable participants to provide more detail on their responses. These sheets were handed in at the Ideas Fair and returned to the City by email or mail if further time or reflection was needed. A total of 27 Comment Sheets were submitted.

c) Online Survey

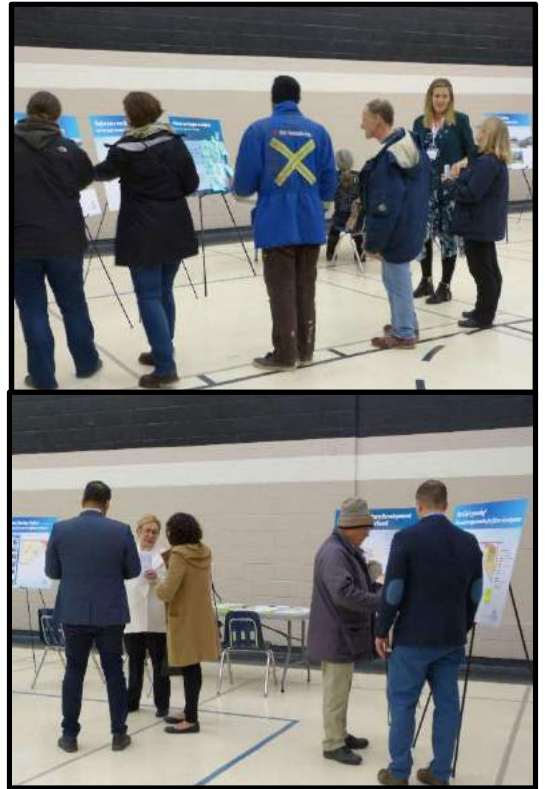
An online feedback option was available on Regina.ca that included the same questions asked at the Ideas Fair. It was provided for those who were unable to attend the event in person or for those who prefer that form of sharing. Four online surveys were completed.

d) Other Submissions

Five independently prepared submissions were also submitted.

#### 4. Summary of Feedback

Feedback was collected and recorded from the Ideas Fair boards, comment sheets, independently prepared submissions and online forms. Over 650 comments were recorded in total.



a) What is Loved about the Neighbourhood

Participants noted what is appreciated about the neighbourhood today. Below summarizes a base for future planning of the area and indicates what residents feel is important to consider:

- Easy access to major amenities, including Core Ritchie Neighbourhood Centre, Wascana Park, Ring Road, Downtown, Vic Ave, churches, schools, library, university, hospital, Farmer's Market, etc.
- Walkable neighbourhood (grid) that has good bus service and generally is easy to get around
- Local and diverse shops and services
- Parks, green spaces, trails and mature trees
- Diversity of area, including:
  - character homes, large lots, and multi-family options
  - area is filled with young, old and diverse groups
- Private, quiet and safe
- Sense of openness and park-like feel (open yards with trees)
- Affordable, friendly and beautiful
- Community events and the people who live here
- Feeling of revitalization
- It is a complete community

b) Comment Summary by Theme

Below is a summary of the other comments, grouped into themes that will inform the development of Neighbourhood Plan Options. This summary is not intended to capture every comment but rather share the breadth of responses that were received. Comments that are outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan will be shared with the applicable department.

a. **LAND USE**

Though there were a few comments suggesting that no change should occur, there was generally support for infill development and the value it brings to foster revitalization in the neighbourhood. However, concerns were raised with how that development has been proceeding to date. These concerns mostly focused around:

- how current infill development fits into the neighbourhood and what it and the resulting landscaping looks like (aesthetically),
- impact to surrounding homes (e.g. shadows from tall buildings and setbacks between houses), and
- impacts to the broader community, such as parking and traffic, when it results in more units (e.g. when multi-family homes replace single-family homes) as well as a feeling of a loss of greenspace when larger buildings are placed on lots that previously had a home with a smaller footprint.

Residential

There were also a few comments requesting the City to prevent lot-splitting with the concern that it results in more units. This concern was aligned with multiple comments identifying rental properties as an issue. Related, some requested the City to limit the number of rental properties that an owner can have and/or an overall reduction in the number of rental properties within the neighbourhood. Concerns related to rental seemed to mostly focus on the increase in number of units that resulted from new development (noted as a general concern above) as well as property maintenance.

There were varying perspectives on the need for more or different housing types. While a few indicate that the amount and type of residential development is sufficient, the majority note a need for more specific housing types (the following were identified: single family, seniors, multi-family, group homes, condominiums, affordable, small (<1000sqft), secondary suites, dual-use (i.e. commercial on main floor with residential above)). In terms of the form of multi-family housing, some note a desire for smaller-scale options (e.g. duplexes or fourplexes) over apartments.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Landscaping requirements in the Zoning Bylaw for dwelling units and group care dwellings are that the front yard and side yards bordering a public street or pathway must be landscaped within two years of occupancy.

The Zoning Bylaw identifies required lot widths and related requirements for splitting lots.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Policies in Design Regina, the Official Community Plan support urban corridors as locations for pedestrian and transit-oriented mixed-use development and as hubs for community interaction and identity. This includes a mix of commercial and residential development, higher density development along transit hubs and corridors, and pedestrian-oriented development.

Design Regina also directs growth within our existing neighbourhoods (i.e. intensification) in order to achieve community goals.

At the same time, there was interest in supporting options to encourage renovation of existing homes versus focusing entirely on new builds. Similarly, considering opportunities for renovating existing non-residential buildings, such as churches for day cares or recreation was encouraged.

#### Non-Residential

In terms of commercial and non-residential development, similar to feedback on residential development, a few noted no need for further development while a majority indicated interest in more shops, amenities and services and that they be located around existing commercial and service areas that are both walkable while ensuring adequate parking. One example of this was suggested as exploring place-making opportunities at the corner of Broadway Avenue and Central Avenue. However, concerns were raised numerous times about the number of body rub parlours along Victoria Avenue noting that a diversification of services should be sought.

A more centrally located grocery store option was identified as a need along with opportunities for recreation, physical activity and gym space. There was also a suggestion for new spaces for artistic expression (e.g. craft shops) with coffee shops, used bookstores, etc. to complement it.

In terms of the location of new development, some feel it is important to maintain single-family homes, particularly in areas where it is the predominant building form. Some would like to see seniors and affordable housing more distributed through the neighbourhood versus concentrated within or around the area. There was also consistent interest in focusing increased density such as low-rise multiple-unit development along collector and arterial streets and close to transit and accommodate high-rise buildings along the periphery within or adjacent to larger-scale commercial precincts. A specific suggestion was to re-zone Winnipeg Street between Victoria Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue to allow low-rise development and create a transition from downtown. Related, another comment was to look at office and amenity-type buildings (e.g. doctor or dentist office) on Winnipeg and College for walk-to-work jobs with size consistent with what is allowed for residential. Another comment was that new development, especially that of higher density, take advantage of south facing options.

While outside the specific Plan Area, there were many comments appreciating the services provided at Broadway Shopping Centre that serve the Al Ritchie Neighbourhood.

#### Zoning

Related to the new Zoning Bylaw, there were a couple of comments made to reconsider the transition of the R6 Zone – Residential Multiple Housing in the old Zoning Bylaw to the new Zoning Bylaw as the RH Zone – High Rise. It was noted that the area in Al Ritchie now zoned RH would be better zoned RL – Residential Low-Rise given the surrounding lower density residential precincts.

Also, there was a suggestion for there to be a disincentive for land used that is being used for a lesser purpose than it is zoned.

#### Vacant Lots

Vacant lots were identified as a concern and interest was expressed in more community gardens. A suggestion to address this was to consider using vacant lots for temporary community gardens; this

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Policies in Design Regina, the Official Community Plan enable the development of complete neighbourhoods. This includes:

- Supporting housing diversity;
- Supporting local shopping needs (neighbourhood hubs); and
- Distinctive character, identity and sense of place.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The new Zoning Bylaw regulates where new body rub parlours can be located.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The Underutilized Land Improvement Strategy includes an action to consider changes to how properties are taxed to discourage vacant sites.

included a reference to a Vancouver program that has moveable garden boxes to facilitate use in temporary vacant spaces.

## **b. BUILT FORM**

Built form refers to the shape and design of buildings as well as their relationship with streets and open space. In the comments, the consistent feedback was to maintain neighbourhood character and overall look and feel of the area. Many described this further by stating things like “new development should fit the neighbourhood”.

### Residential

Regarding specific concerns, building height was most identified (particularly where a large, tall home is built immediately beside a small, older home). As well, setbacks, placement of windows, scale of building, shed roofs, and new garages in the front are also considered issues.

There was much interest in new Residential Infill Development (RID) Overlay zone in new Zoning Bylaw, 2019 and how it will help shape future development in the area. At the same time, some want it to more strongly direct new homes to imitate and complement those homes in the immediate area. In that vein, there was a comment to consider regulating use of specific colours or types of building materials in new development. At the same time, others noted an appreciation for diversity and are concerned that adding too many restrictions will prevent further redevelopment and revitalization of the area.

Ideas were shared around the character of the neighbourhood and how it could be maintained. One respondent suggested the character of the neighbourhood, or parts of the neighbourhood, can be described as small, 2-bedroom, bungalow or two-storey single dwelling unit homes, often with pastel-colouring. Another suggested Arnheim and Assiniboia Place areas within Al Ritchie should be designated as an Architectural Control District to protect wartime homes; another option offered was to create a heritage property initiative. As well, there were a few comments to encourage protecting heritage properties while others caution that just because something is old, it does not mean it should be saved.

Landscaping of yards was repeatedly identified as being important. Some suggested that the treelined streetscapes be retained and restored; to do so, a solution of having a tree be required on every property was offered. Others shared concerns about what was considered landscaping in the area, particularly in new infill development sites where gravel was used to cover the yards.

### Non-Residential

From a commercial perspective, there were some suggestions for the City to create a commercial retrofit upgrade program to support improvements to existing businesses. One respondent was more specific, recommending that commercial store fronts be street-view friendly, no long blank walls. As well, there was a comment that the height restrictions for residential and commercial development should be the same and another shared that home-based businesses should still look like houses.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The new Residential Infill Development Overlay zone in the Zoning Bylaw set front and side yard setbacks; it also set maximums for the height of the overall building as well as the height of the first floor.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Architectural Control Districts can be used to regulate the look of an area, including the colour and type of building materials. Careful consideration is required when creating these districts to ensure it aligns with community goals.



### c. TRANSPORTATION and PARKING

A general appreciation for walkability of the community along with its inter-connectedness to the rest of the city was expressed consistently. Support for reducing traffic and looking to improve options for alternative modes of transportation was noted. More specifically, some shared an interest in improved transit services, including better connections to services in other parts of the city (e.g. Costco, university) and heated bus shelters while others suggested improving support for carpooling and prioritizing infrastructure improvements for walking (e.g. replacing broken sidewalks) and cycling by improving the bike lane network on the streets as well as on trails and pathways. As well, there were a few concerns noted about parking creeping into the neighbourhood from the Regina General Hospital. Reduced parking availability was also noted as a concern from an increase in the number of properties with multiple rental units where a single dwelling previously had been.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

An east-west bike route through the city is being planned that is anticipated to run through the Al Ritchie neighbourhood; an update is expected towards the end of this year.

There are two Express Bus Routes that go through Al Ritchie: the Victoria East Express and Arcola Downtown Express as well as two regular bus routes: Argyle Park, Wood Meadows and Varsity Park, Mount Royal.

### d. WASTE MANAGEMENT

There were a few comments expressing interest in more recycling and end-of-life drop-off spots in the neighbourhood. One suggestion was to improve public education about waste management and other environmental initiatives through the establishment of a Centre of Green Excellence in the area.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Waste Plan Regina is the City's guide for city-wide waste management activities.

### e. INFRASTRUCTURE

Comments were received about the maintenance of underground infrastructure as well as the roads, alleys, street and back alley lighting, sidewalks, and parks. Noted most was the disrepair of sidewalks. This was identified as one of the biggest issues given the impact on pedestrians, especially seniors and others with mobility challenges. Some also requested that neighbourhood infrastructure upgrades (including parks and all utilities (i.e. SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, etc.) occur as required before further development occurs.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

This year, City Administration will be bringing forward a report to Council on proposed enhancements to the Lead Service Connection Program.

A specific concern mentioned numerous times was related to lead pipes. Comments were made both in the context of those that reside there today as well as how it could impact others who may want to move into the area in the future.

Feedback related to infrastructure costs were also shared. A few comments came in to seek more energy efficient construction and development that considers climate change, and another suggested that there be a program for homeowners to spread cost of infrastructure repairs (e.g. sewer, water, power) over time.

#### **f. HOUSING and HOMELESSNESS**

There were many comments underscoring the value of unique homes and overall character in the area. Some request that the City provide funding to complete exterior improvements and renovations for existing homes.

As well, concerns were repeatedly expressed about homelessness in the area and solutions, such as providing shelters, were offered.

#### **g. PARKS, RECREATION, CULTURE and FORESTRY**

Much appreciation was expressed for the Core Ritchie Centre and the services it provides. To complement this resource in the neighbourhood, some noted a desire for improvements to be made to the facility (e.g. showers, pool, fitness facilities) as well as increasing the availability of walking and cycling trails, shuffling, dog parks and community gardening in the area. There was also a note to encourage arts spaces that could be used to collaborate with others to foster more cultural activities in the area.

Parks and greenspace were identified as an important element of the area. A particular concern was expressed for the greenspace on Dixon Crescent and how it will be revitalized. There were also a few comments indicating a greater need for protection of existing trees during development as well as an improved program to replace trees that have died.

#### **h. POLICE and SAFETY**

Safety was identified as being an important topic. In that vein, some expressed that they felt it was safe today while others identified a need for improved safety and a feeling that crime is on the rise. To address the need, some suggested an increased police presence (such as reopening the neighbourhood Regina Police Service (RP)S branch at the Core Ritchie Centre), implementing options to reduce traffic speeds, and improved lighting, especially in alleys.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The City's Housing Incentive Policy (HIP) introduced a new tax exemption program for the repair of existing affordable rental housing units in alignment with National Housing Co-Investment Fund established under the Federal Government's National Housing Strategy.

In 2019, the City approved "Everyone is Home, a Five-Year Plan to End Chronic and Episodic Homelessness in Regina" to guide actions to address homelessness.

The City's Heritage Incentive Policy has an objective to encourage upgrading designated heritage properties. The total cumulative tax exemption will be equal to either (a) 50% of the eligible conservation work costs, or (b) ten years of tax exemptions, whichever is less. Cosmetic improvements, painting, repairs, regular maintenance, tenant improvements and new additions are NOT eligible.

The City has a Cultural Plan that has goals to embrace cultural diversity, strengthen the artistic cultural community, and commemorate and celebrate the City's cultural heritage.

The City's Recreation Master Plan provides direction in areas including indoor aquatic and wellness facilities, arts and culture program spaces, athletic fields, dog parks, community gardens, and multi-use pathways.

Those making improvements to their home or yard near City-owned trees are required to protect them from construction, demolition or landscaping work.

The City's Tree Replacement Program makes trees available to homeowners each year, by request.

*For more information on these Plans and Programs, visit [Regina.ca](http://Regina.ca).*

## i. BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

There were many concerns identified about the maintenance of properties, graffiti and state of some of the alleys and the impact it had on safety and community pride. As such, there were a lot of comments expressing a desire for increased enforcement.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Concerns about property, zoning or noise bylaw violations can be submitted to Service Regina at 306-777-7000 or through the online service request form on regina.ca.

## j. OTHER

Some comments applied to areas outside of the Al Ritchie Neighbourhood. These will be recorded and reviewed when the Neighbourhood Plans for those areas are being developed.

Other comments related to organizations outside of the City's jurisdiction. For instance, there was feedback to improve play structures and recreation offered in school or on school grounds and some offered feedback on other utilities.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Schools, health care, non-City utilities (e.g. SaskEnergy, SaskPower, etc.) are not within the City's jurisdiction. Concerns should be shared with those organizations directly.

## 5. Next Steps

The City is reviewing this feedback to inform the development of options for the Neighbourhood Plan. These options will be shared with the community for comment in April (i.e. Community Event 2).

