

# Applicant Outreach Summary

## Outreach Strategy

*Provide an overview of your outreach strategy summary of tactics and techniques you undertook ( Include dates locations # of participants and any other related details).*

The temporary road closure to support the Connaught Open Street temporary installation was informed by community engagement. Since the temporary closure in June 2022 the community has had opportunity to provide ongoing feed back to adjust the design and improve the temporary installation. Engagement opportunities have included online and in-person methods; including surveys, workshops, pop-ups, and charettes. The participation of students from Connaught School during the engagement process has been significant, impactful, and provided a unique voice not always highlighted during a typical public engagement process. Methods to engage students at Connaught School included design charettes and brainstorming activities on how they envisioned making their streets safer. The collective feedback garnered over the past three years is informing and guiding the design process to transition from a temporary closure and tactical urbanism installation; to a permanent road closure and park land-use redesignation. In addition to past engagement efforts, a Stakeholder Working Group has been established to guide ongoing decision making, and final concept design that will inform the Connaught Open Street permanent design outcome.

This working group is made up of students, parents, educators from Connaught School, residents of Connaught Gardens, and representatives from the Beltline Neighbourhood Association. Through meeting with this working group and reviewing 2 years of feedback collected on the various iterations of the temporary pilot, the Stakeholder Working Group defined priorities and markers of success for the permanent open street design. Throughout the design process, four Stakeholder Working Group sessions aim to synthesize project priorities, help define functional programming, and collaboratively deliver a vetted concept.

Specific outreach strategies, methods, and events to engage the community to date include:

- 6 co-design workshops with over 112 workshop participants
- 2100+ flyers distributed to surroundings residents
- 49 pop-up events with over 1500 pop-up participants
- 3 surveys completed with over 280 respondents
- 4 planned working group sessions during the design phase (2 completed to date)

The timeline for engagement to date is as follows:

June – December 2021: Co-design workshops with Connaught Students

June – October 2022: Pilot #1 – Next Calgary held weekly summer camp style engagements

Summer 2023 – Pilot #2: Sustainable Calgary held biweekly site popups called the Forever block Party

Winter 2023 - Pilot #2: Sustainable Calgary has hosted weekly/biweekly fire pits during school pick up time.

June 2024: Project website was launched, 1529 flyers delivered to local residents, 3 pop up events, 2 co-design workshops, and 1 working groups session

July 2024: New onsite signage placed on site, 7 pop up events, working session #2

Engagement is still underway with more workshops and pop-up events planned over the summer of 2024.

### **Future engagement**

August 2024: 2-3 popup events, site walkthrough workshop, working group session #3

Sept – Oct 2024: School and community surveys, working groups session #4 & #5

### **Affected Parties**

Connaught School - Parents and residents

Connaught Gardens Residents (residents directly adjacent to site)

Beltline Neighborhood Association

### **What did we hear?**

Throughout the temporary closure of the block, ongoing engagement was conducted with adjacent residents, Connaught School, and visitors. After the first block closure in 2022 a survey was conducted by the Connaught School Parent Council. Based on this survey 88.2% of respondents felt that the Open Street felt more welcoming and 70.4% of respondents said they wanted to see the Connaught Open Street become a permanent installation. The same survey in 2023 saw 62.5% of respondents wanting to see the Open Street become a permanent installation, and over 60% found it welcoming and safe, while another 60% wanted to see the “fun” factor increase in the next iteration. Survey data for 2024 is currently being collated and processed. The most important noted uses of the space included pedestrian safety, traffic calming, additional recreational and public space, and a space for community programming and activities.

When asked, ‘What would you add or change to improve the space?’, top answers included bike infrastructure, increasing greenery, play equipment, rest infrastructure (benches), and access to a water fountain. These responses are being considered in the conceptual and detailed site design, which is currently underway.

While it is hard to summarize almost 3 years of observational data as well, the following major themes were noted as needing to be addressed: the site was well used by a spectrum of ages (kids to seniors) and use-types (passive and active recreation); confusion for both drivers and open street users exiting/entering the space at 13<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>; better mix of signage and design communication to prevent drive-through traffic from turning on to 10<sup>th</sup> off 12<sup>th</sup>; aggressive driver behavior when detouring around the Open Street (i.e. speeding down the alley) to name the most recurrent items.

Feedback was also received from the adjacent residents that consideration needed to be made for noise levels with regard to proximity of design elements and programming activities. For example, a skateboard ramp was initially included as popup temporary installation element, but it was removed due to the noise it created from scooter and skateboard use. Concerns around vehicular interaction with Connaught Gardens also proliferated, and included: waste and recycling pickup, emergency vehicle access, delivery vehicle parking, visitor parking, 2-car garage access off 10<sup>th</sup> St, excess vehicular movement down the alleyway, vehicles making multi-point turns at the dead-end created by the street closure. These are all also being taken into consideration as the design

evolves, and we are working with the City to ensure a more collaborative response to these concerns.

Connaught School users (students, staff and parents) continue to be highly supportive of the project and would like to see: clear parkade and drop-off access maintained, more heat mitigation measures incorporated alongside all the recreational uses, and would also like to see further consideration given to how the existing school playground interacts with the Open Street.

#### **How did input influence decisions?**

The current temporary design implementation has been shaped over the last three years by community engagement and feedback from interest groups. Continuous engagement opportunities have encouraged an open dialog and an iterative design process.

Examples of decisions based on input:

- The temporary installation (existing on site today) was designed based on charettes completed with the students at Connaught School. The built outcome incorporated desired activities, shapes, and colours identified by the students.
- Skateboard ramps were removed from the installation as it was determined that they made too much noise from scooters and skateboards for adjacent residents in the community.
- Concerns about safety, particularly when crossing the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> intersection, by a Connaught Gardens resident with visual accessibility needs prompted the installation of an audible crossing signal button
- Feedback about the aesthetics of temporary jersey barriers during the first phase prompted the installation of painted concrete barriers
- Requests for year-round operation of the Open Street prompted winter closure and activation in 2023.

#### **How did you close the loop?**

Ongoing conversations and communications have been maintained with key stakeholders, who also make up our stakeholder working group: Connaught school students, staff, parents, Connaught Gardens board members, and the Beltline Neighbourhood Association. As our tactical summary shows, we've had a semi-regular engagement presence at the site throughout the last 2.5 years in the form of popups, which also allowed conversations and information sharing to happen in real time. The option of asynchronous feedback via the project webpage has been available, and many comments were received and responded to.

Engagement reports were compiled and published on the webpage after the initial phase and will be shared again as this phase of engagement draws to a close. What We Heard report summaries were also made available to key stakeholders each year.