

# Bellevue Community League

Dear, Edmonton City Council.

Four times in the last five years, the City of Edmonton has threatened to close Eastglen Leisure Centre. The first happened in 2015, then again in 2018, and again in 2019. In 2020, it's happening again during a pandemic when your communities are at their most vulnerable.

You only gave us less than three weeks to organize and prepare this time. The good news is there are other community leagues in Edmonton that are equally concerned with how the **Fall 2020 Supplemental Budget Adjust** plans to close their public facilities. The recommendation to close Eastglen is perplexing, considering the City was consulting and engaging the community about the future of Eastglen up until September of this year.

This is why we've banded together with a simple message:  
**Keep these facilities open.**

Bellevue, Queen Alexandria, Oliver and Highlands Community Leagues (among many others), are concerned with the negative impacts that these closures will have on our neighbours and to our neighbourhoods. Please refer to the joint statement that was submitted to you on behalf of our community leagues. We are also in support of the Innovate Eastglen working group, lead by Joe Hewko, and their ideas to implement low cost options to improve accessibility and plans to innovate Eastglen by focusing on health and wellness. This work was first presented at a 2019 public hearing and was included in the recent correspondence sent to you by Mr. Hewko.

According to the proposed City Plan (pg 33), the closures of Eastglen Leisure Centre, Scona Pool and Oliver Pool work against this vision to increase the proportion of city-wide growth that occurs through redevelopment, resulting in more activity, destination, and different types of development closer to home.

For example, Outcome 1.1.1.4 claims to "Encourage healthy and active living by supporting community-focused recreational, leisure, social and cultural programs." This outcome has a direct correlation with Eastglen's current programs before the facility was shut down in March. This includes creating safe places for women, girls, and gender minorities through their women only swim program. Eastglen is also a place for seniors to meet and connect with their neighbours while staying healthy through aquatic exercise programs. There is also the free Community Swim Program that provides an affordable way for our members and their families to enjoy the leisure centre.

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Then there is the city's long-term Walkability Strategy (2009) to make Edmonton more accessible by ensuring there are amenities and work spaces available within a 15-minute walk from our homes. See page 54. According to Google Maps, Commonwealth is a 38-minute walk from Eastglen and even further for the Highlands community.

Why take all of this away in an attempt to save \$1.4M this year? And more importantly if you take it away what are you replacing these facilities with? The city doesn't have a great track record with following through on replacing closed facilities with something that the community will find of value. Simply look no further than the Coliseum and Exhibition grounds. By abandoning Eastglen you will be leaving one more empty building for the community to deal with, putting our mature neighbourhood at further risk.

As a partner in creating strong communities, and on behalf of our residents who rely on the health and wellness services provided by this public facility, we ask that the City of Edmonton keeps its promise to keep the Eastglen Leisure Centre open.

Respectfully,

Richard McAdie, President

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