

INCLUSION THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES

BEDDINGTON HEIGHTS COMMUNITY

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01

INTRODUCTION

01 | INTRODUCTION

Public space has central importance to questions of sustainable, equitable and enriching urban life. Urban public spaces offer obvious health benefits offering a place to get fresh air and exercise. Some researchers have shown that cities deprived of open spaces suffer of higher levels of stress. The public realm is where community happens, where people meet and where the city is shaped. A healthy public realm promotes democracy and community cohesiveness. Space is said to become place as community attachments deepen as personal meanings emerge in the context. Space and place are intrinsic parts of our being in the world, in terms of the nature and degree of people's values, feelings, beliefs, and perceptions about locations, districts, and regions. We relate to other people and the physical environment. It has long been recognized that open spaces are important for our wellbeing. Social interactions and pursuits are integral for the community's well-being. Open and urban spaces offer opportunities for a wide range of those interactions. Open spaces also allow for the needed interaction with nature as well as the interaction with others, and the opportunity for self and community identity expression. Hence, the importance of the public place to the well-being of society (Salah El-Din Ouf and El-Zafarany, 2018).

The quality of buildings and spaces has a strong influence on the quality of people's lives. Decisions about the design, planning and management of places can enhance or restrict a sense of belonging. They can increase or reduce feelings of security, stretch or limit boundaries, promote or reduce mobility, and improve or damage health. They can remove real and imagined barriers between communities and foster understanding and generosity of spirit. Even though accessibility has improved over the last decade, and planning policy has shifted, with investment providing new facilities to once-excluded communities, the fact remains that poor and disadvantaged people are far more likely to live in poor quality environments. Social, cultural and economic inequalities are still being literally built into new places, and planners and designers need to examine more closely the impact of their decisions.

The built environment can contribute to a more equal, inclusive and cohesive society if the

places where we live, the facilities we use and our neighborhoods and meeting places are designed to be accessible and inclusive.

People experience the built environment differently according to who they are – their social, cultural and economic background. The full diversity of this experience needs to be considered if all users are to be comfortable and feel that a particular space or place belongs to them.

Inclusive environments will:

- be responsive to people's needs
- be flexible in use
- offer choice when a single design solution cannot meet all users' needs
- be convenient so they can be used without undue effort or 'special separation
- be welcoming to a wide variety of people, making them feel they belong
- accommodate without fuss or exception those who have specific requirements (CABE, 2008).

In this report we are focusing on providing a policy plan for redevelopment of public spaces in the community of Beddington Heights in Calgary with the approach of inclusion of residents particularly those who have been marginalized. We were able to identify a population of residents in and around Beddington Heights that felt distant, uninformed, and unaware of a majority of public events, public places, and engagement within the community. Not only did they feel uninformed, but more importantly they were eager and curious to learn about this information and to participate. This concept was shaped with the approach of inclusion of those who may not be involved but wish to be.

This report may assist community associations in their efforts to have inclusive and equitable planning strategies for their future endeavors.

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WHY INCLUSION?

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2.1. Beddington Heights Community Association Meetings

On a weekly basis, often multiple times a week, we met with Alicia Ta, the Director at Large for the Beddington Heights Community Association and Co-Chair to the Reimagine Beddington Committee. Our discussions with Alicia evolved throughout the semester as did our project. When we first were introduced to each other we spent the first portion of our project to align goals and objectives while also understanding what was attainable to accomplish. After the first few meetings, we understood that there was little engagement in the community and traditional approaches were not working for the community association. Through getting to know Alicia and the other community association members we proposed to focus our attention to the large immigrant population as it makes up for more than one third of the community but makes up for one of the least engaged audiences. Alicia suggested we get in touch with the Agape School and see if a relationship could be formed to engage with their students.

As we acquainted with the Agape Students and progressed with our workshops, we worked closely with Alicia to ensure our direction was aligned. It was also very important for us to consider that some of this work would lapse passed our school project and our involvement would shift away. Alicia attended all of our workshops. After each workshop we would meet separately to go over the results and plan what the next steps would be. Ultimately, the collaboration with the Beddington Heights Community Association was primarily with Alicia and really assisted our project and helped generate the results we were able to accomplish.

2.2. Reimagine Beddington Committee

Reimagine Beddington meets once a month to discuss initiatives, plans, and goals. We were fortunate to be invited to two separate meetings where the committee took time away from their meeting to discuss our project and how it could align with their goals. We quickly learned about the ongoing proposed community garden that the committee was working hard on. At the time of our first meeting, we were still only generating a rela-

tionship with the Agape students. We agreed that at the next meeting we would provide insight and help in the desired survey to the public and to the students.

At the second meeting with the Reimagine Beddington Committee we prioritized the alignment of the proposed community garden and our workshops with the Agape students. We discussed that it would be a tremendous opportunity to utilize the established relationship with the Agape students to help provide feedback and data for the survey. Also, it was to be a great way to conclude our involvement. The students' contribution to the survey amounted to over 20% additional responses and provided an insightful and unique perspective that many respondents did not represent. Ultimately, having the ability to meet additionally with the Reimagine Beddington Committee provided another layer to our involvement and work. We were able to steer our work to provide deliverables for a targeted goal being the community garden.

2.3. Demographic Studies

As mentioned before, we focused on the immigrant populations. The population of the community, based on the Canadian census 2016 profile is 11607. Beddington Heights is home for many immigrants. Roughly one third of the community are immigrants. Looking at the community profile for Beddington Heights and overlooking the demographics would simply be a big mistake and a missed opportunity.

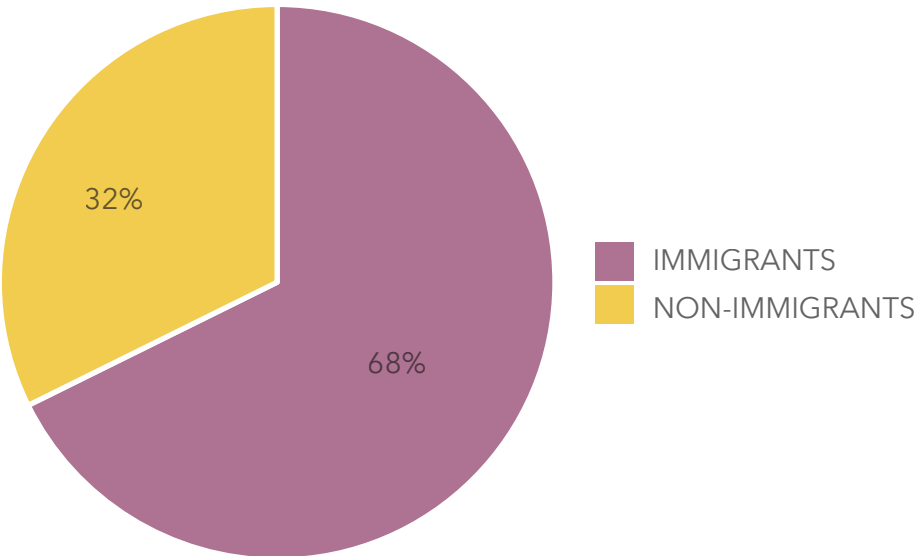


Chart 2.1: Percentage of Immigrants

02 | WHY INCLUSION?



Vision Statement

Based on the mentioned discussions and findings, the vision of our project is:

Designing public spaces through inclusion of under-represented population to increase awareness, equality and decrease the sense of isolation.

This concept was crafted out of the collaboration we have been fortunate to have with the Beddington Heights Community Association and its Sub Committee, Reimagine Beddington, in addition to the generous involvement from the Agape Language School, its teachers, and students. Through ongoing teamwork and engagement, we were able to identify a population of residents in and around Beddington Heights that felt distant, uninformed, and unaware of a majority of public events, public places, and engagement within the community. Not only did they feel uninformed, but more importantly they were eager and curious to learn about this information and to participate. This concept was shaped with the approach of inclusion of those who may not be involved but wish to be.

03

FIELD STUDY

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3.1. Type of Open Spaces in the Community

Beddington Heights is one of Calgary's largest communities. Originally a Canadian Pacific Railway Station, the area was annexed by the city in 1975 to become part of Calgary's northwest sector.

Bordered by two large parks, Nose Hill Park and West Nose Creek Park/Confluence Park, the neighbourhood features a large amount of green space and open recreation areas. Some key features are the two shopping centres along Centre Street, the two schools, St. Bede Elementary School and Beddington Heights School, and a large community centre, the Beddington Theatre Arts Centre.

There are six types of open spaces in the community:



(a)



(b)



(c)





1. BACKYARD PARKS

SUB-NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



2. CONNECTION SPACES

PUBLIC UTILITY PARKS



3. NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



4. COMMUNITY PARKS

COMMUNITY PARKS



5. CENTRAL OPEN SPACES

DISTRICT PARKS



6. PATHWAY PARKS

LINEAR PARKS



PHOTO LEGEND: SAMPLE PARKS

- a. NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK
Beacham Close NW
these are open spaces between 4000 + 36 000 m²
- b. PATHWAY PARK (the City of Calgary defines these as linear parks)
Berkley Drive NW
these are open spaces between 10 + 20 m wide
- c. BACKYARD PARK (the City of Calgary defines these as sub-neighbourhood parks)
Berwick Place NW
these are parks around 2000 m²
- d. CENTRAL OPEN SPACE (the City of Calgary defines these as district parks)
Bermuda Drive NW
these are open spaces that are more than 96 000 m²
- e. CONNECTION SPACE (the City of Calgary defines these as public utility lots)
Bedridge Place NE
these connect streets to pathways, parks, or alleys
- f. COMMUNITY PARK
Bedridge Way NE
these are open spaces between 36 000 + 96 000 m²

Figure 3.1: Type of Open Spaces in the Community

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3.2. Access to Public Spaces

Access to open spaces is an important factor to make sure everybody can use them. The following map shows the access radius of different public spaces in the community based on their scale of function. The access radius of Backyard Parks, which are the sub-neighborhood parks is considered 200 m (5-10 minute walk), while the access radius of Neighborhood and Community Parks is 300-350 m (10-15 minute walk).

As demonstrated in the map, the whole community has access at least to one public space which shows the high level of access to public spaces in the community.

Moreover, Nose Hill Park and Nose Creek Park on the borders of the community are city-scale parks that are accessible for the residents of the Beddington Heights.

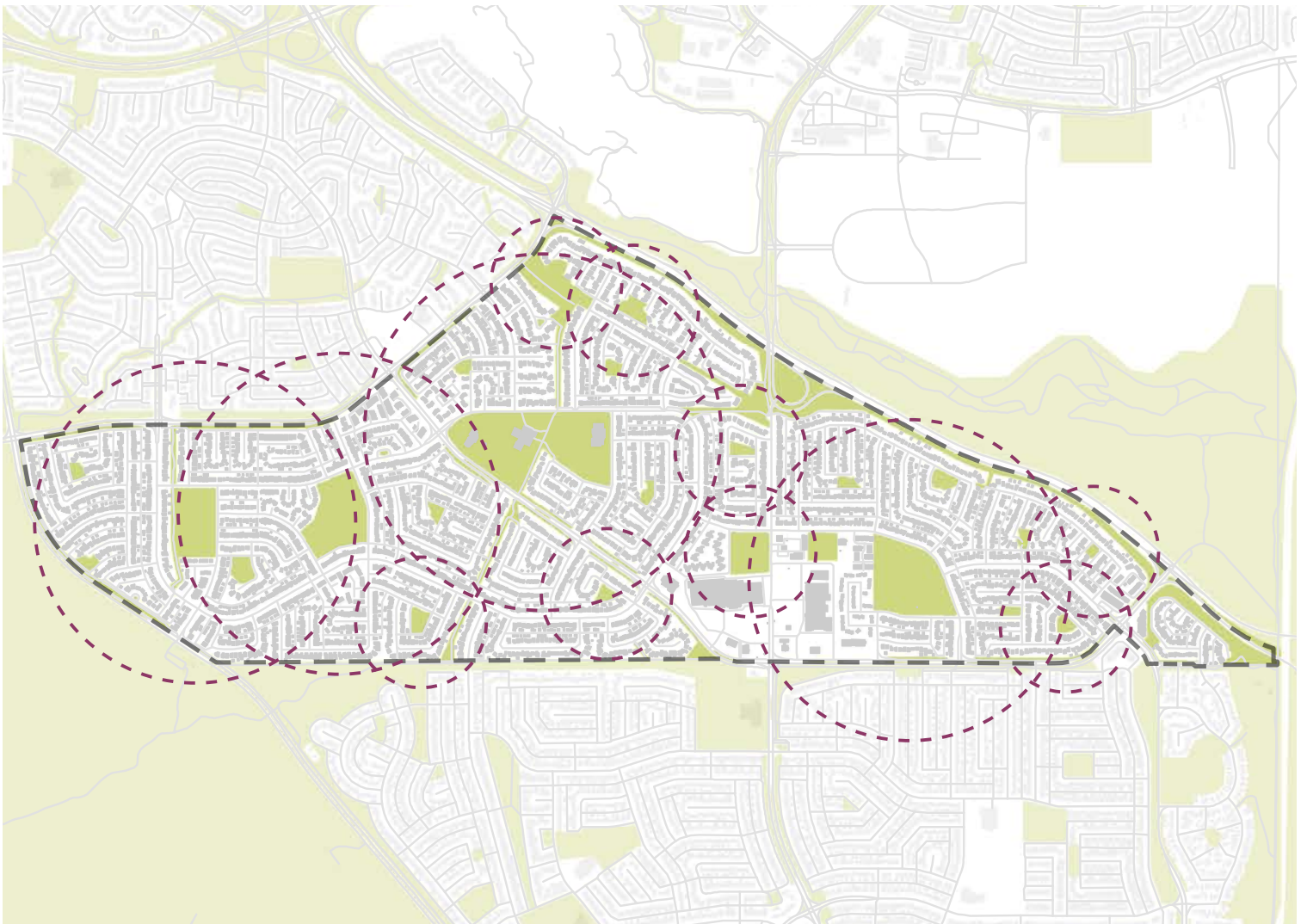


Figure 3.2: Access Radius of Open Spaces

3.3. Main Nodes

3.3.1. Entertainment Node

This node is located in the center of the community.

This park contains:

- 3 soccer fields
- 2 ball diamonds
- 1 outdoor skating rink, with lights
- 1 outdoor basketball court
- both the skating rink and the basketball court are located beside the theatre arts centre
- this park is bisected by a regional pathway
- It contains 2 elementary schools, as well as the theatre arts centre
- Each school has a large playground with benches and garbage bins associated with it
- there are clumps of trees along the edges of the space
- benches in most current park spaces tend to be singular and somewhat randomly located in grassed areas, not conducive to facilitating conversation and interaction
- common purpose areas tend not to have gathering spaces associated with them, which would be a good opportunity for creating more resident interactions
- gathering areas are not necessarily located close to amenities, and washrooms are a common request for areas hosting large groups

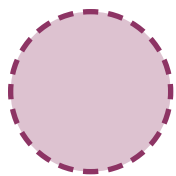
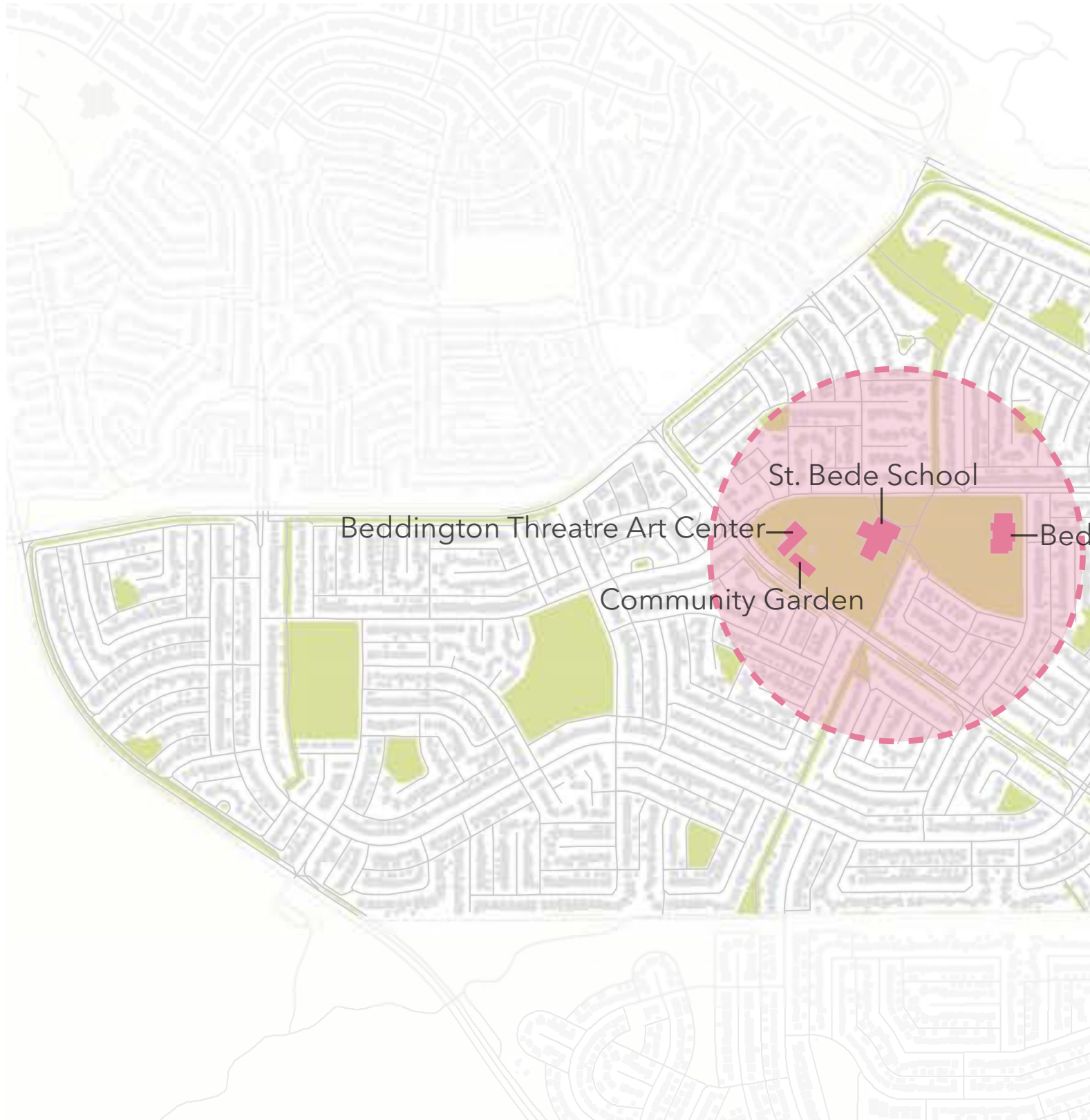
Moreover, the community association has suggested a community garden located in this node which is going to be designed through public engagement.

3.3.2. Commercial Node

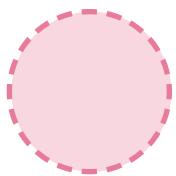
The commercial node of the community is located on the southern border of the community along the center street. There are different commercial buildings in this area and there are many bus stops connecting this node to the rest of the community.

It is conveniently located near the proposed Green Line LRT station which would be a unique opportunity for Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

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COMMERCIAL NODE



ENTERTAINMENT NODE

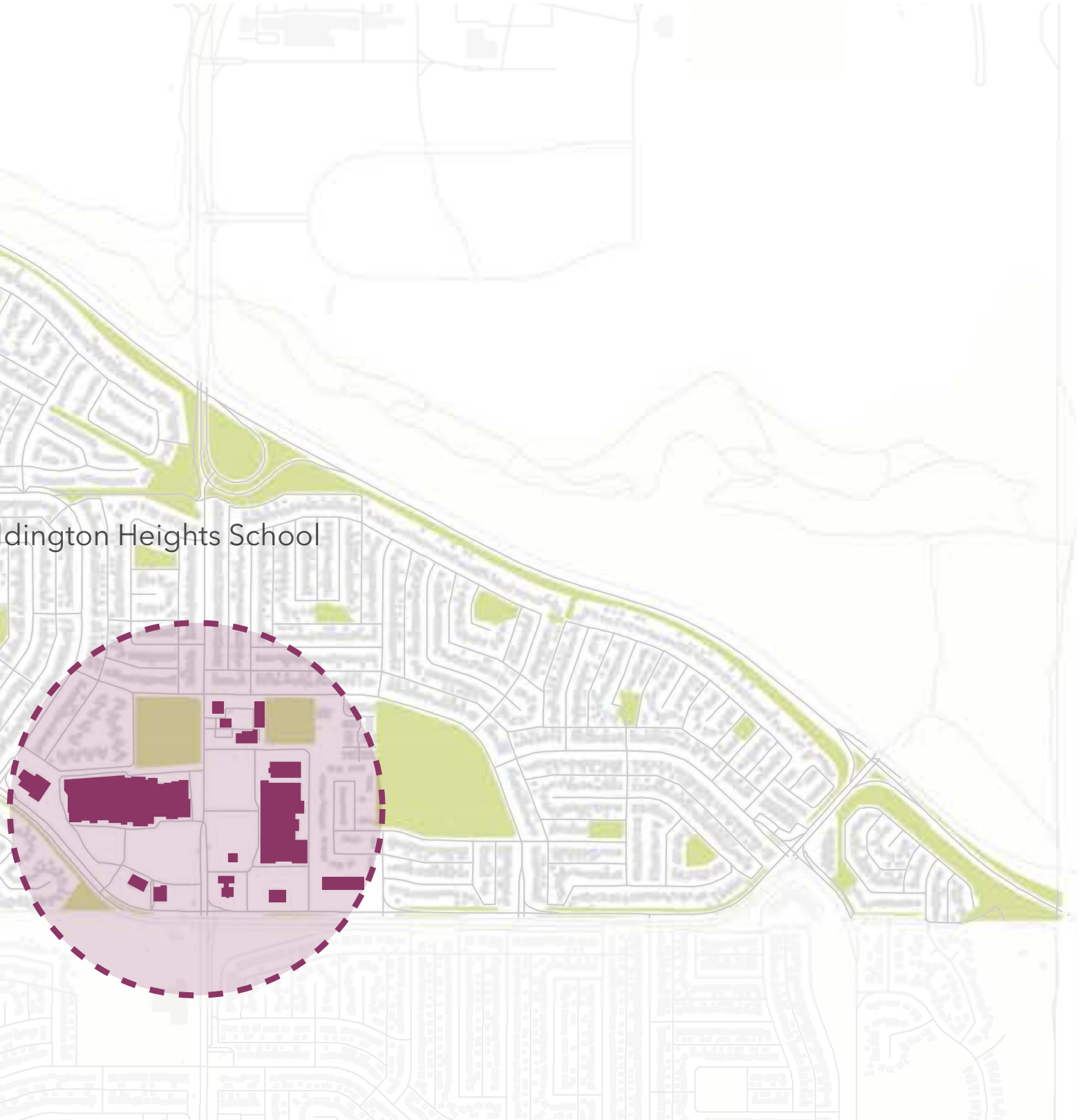


Figure 3.3: Commercial and Entertainment Nodes

04

WHAT IS INCLUSION?

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4. What Is “Inclusion”?

According to United Nations (UN), “inclusion is defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.” (UN, 2016)

Based on a publication by Gehl institute in 2018:

- **Inclusion is an outcome:** All people who use a public space feel welcome, respected, safe, and accommodated, regardless of who they are, where they come from, their abilities, how old they are, or how they use the space.
- **Inclusion is a process:** Inclusionary public space processes recognize and respect the needs and values of people using the space and the assets present in a place, actively engaging and cultivating trust among participants, ultimately allowing all members of the community to shape, achieve, and sustain a common vision. This is a deliberate process that requires understanding of context and lived experience, among other factors.
- **Inclusion is a tool:** As a tool, inclusion can help practitioners and communities reduce and ultimately eliminate health inequities stemming from long-term systemic discrimination and other barriers. Inclusion has the power to create real change—in practice, in process, and in people’s lives (Gehl Institute, 2018).

4.1. What Is ‘Inclusive Public Space’?

Public spaces, by nature, are socially inclusive and pluralist. The ‘inclusive public space’ can be defined as possessing four mutually supportive qualities of ‘access’:

- i) physical access,
- ii) social access,

-
- iii) access to activities and discussions or intercommunications,
 - iv) access to information.

The first quality refers to the access to physical environment, as public space is the place in which everybody is entitled to be physically present. Social access, as also called 'symbolic access' by Carr et al. (1992), involves the presence of cues, in the form of people, design and management elements, suggesting who is and is not welcome in the space. "Environments, individuals and/or groups perceived either as threatening, or comforting or inviting may affect entry into a public space". It is therefore important to improve the environmental image and ambience of a public space to make it more welcoming and/or less intimidating to a wider range of social groups. The third and fourth qualities allow us to define the public space in conjunction with the 'time' dimension. Space where we live, work and experience is not only composed by three dimensions, it is rather a four-dimensional entity; i.e. an outcome of time, which might be studied under its development and use processes. Hence, the 'inclusive' public space is the place where the activities and discussions in its development and use processes are open to all. For example, markets, concerts, speeches, demonstrations, or protests are open to all, if they take place in public environments. Similarly, the development process of the public space must ideally be accessible to everybody, whilst it includes various stages, in each of which the public may not be involved. Yet, there are some crucial activities and discussions, which must be open to all, such as the decision-making stage of developing a public space, the preparation process of its design scheme. Therefore, the 'inclusive public space' is the place where public authorities are responsible for guaranteeing the existence of a public arena in which citizens express their attitudes, asserting their claims and using it for their purposes. This arena enables meanings and uses of a public space change in conformity with citizens' needs and interests, and facilitates renegotiations of understandings to be ongoing between the public and public actors. Finally the fourth quality of 'access' enables us to define the 'inclusive public space' as the place where information regarding its development and use processes are available to all members of the society (Akkar, 2021).

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4.2. What are the principles?

Principle 1: Context

Requires an assessment of the preconditions and baseline data in a place and is especially geared toward researchers, professionals in statistical data or public health departments, or anyone beginning a design, plan, or evaluation of a public space. Principle 1 speaks to the need for background data to understand the context of a place or community and set appropriate goals for inclusionary practices.

Principle 2: Process

Focuses on social and process indicators of trust, participation, and other drivers of inclusion and health in place. It may be most relevant to policymakers and practitioners who work directly with people to advocate for, plan, design, and sustain more inclusive healthy places.

Principle 3: Design & Program

Centers on the physical aspects and design of places and may serve as a checklist for architects and urban designers, in addition to researchers investigating correlations between place and health equity. The metrics may serve as a tool for architects and urban designers as well as for researchers investigating correlations between place and behavioral health outcomes.

Principle 4: Sustain

Stresses social resilience and capacity building, which will benefit community residents and the long-term work of strategic planners, policymakers, politicians, advocates, and community leaders and organizations (Gehl Institute, 2018).

4.3. Inclusive public Space Criteria

4.3.1. Public Space Is Essential for Health & Well-Being

Design and programming of physical space can shape both physical health and mental well-being, every day. Over the past two decades, research across disciplines has brought to light the importance of creating opportunities for physical activity in the places people pass through and visit in their daily lives. Interacting with public spaces, even when we're simply using a sidewalk or crossing a street, is part of everyday life.

Conscientious design considerations are essential in supporting active use and social interactions within those spaces. Lack of physical activity leads to weight gain and obesity and is a primary cause of chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. It's also enormously expensive.

In 2013, physical inactivity cost the world \$67.5 billion through direct health care expenditures and lost productivity. Yet, only one in five American adults (21 percent) meets the national physical activity recommendations for aerobic and muscle strengthening. In addition, only about 25 percent of children and youth engage in 60 minutes of daily physical activity, as recommended. The mental health and well-being benefits of access to safe, high-quality, and green public spaces that provide opportunities for social interaction are substantial. Social isolation, or lack of social connection, is devastating to a person's health, increasing mortality risk by approximately 30%. Loneliness, social isolation, and living alone correspond, respectively, to an average 29%, 26%, and 32% increased likelihood of mortality. Since the 1980s, the percentage of American adults who say they are lonely has doubled from 20% to 40%. In short, the influence of social relationships on mortality risk is comparable with that of other well-established risk factors such as chronic diseases (see Principle 2 for more on community engagement and social isolation). Planners and policymakers don't always think about building health outcomes into their public space work, yet doing so can have many health benefits. The drivers of this principle describe different but connected characteristics of space that may be observed or surveyed. These include the quality of public space, its accessibility and access, its use and diversity of us-

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ers, and the sense of safety and security it advances.

4.3.2. Quality of Public Spaces Supports Inclusion & Active Use

Research shows that the physical characteristics of a space affect how frequently and how widely it is used. For example, trees matter. In one study, the amount of time residents spent in equal-sized common spaces was strongly predicted by the presence, location, and number of trees. The more trees, the more people were observed using the space at any given time. The presence of trees consistently predicted greater use of outdoor spaces in two inner-city neighborhoods— by adults, by youth, and by mixed-age groups of youth and adults. In the same vein, vegetation and vegetative cover have been correlated with increased physical activity in those spaces. Other characteristics and amenities such as site furnishings (benches, waste bins, shade, etc.) also invite a diversity of users and increase use. Sites with a mix of features invite a mix of users and uses—people from different racial and ethnic groups who want to use the space for socializing, spending time with family or friends, recreation, independent relaxation, or group activities. It is important to note that inclusionary design interventions range in scale from an object such as a bench or a trashcan to projects that involve landscaping, entrance and edge design, etc. Whether large or small, they may have equal value within a space. The physical characteristics of a place may also influence the development of neighborhood social ties and cohesion, with positive effects for community connectedness and mental well-being. Quality of space imparts a unique individual experience; that is, each person will perceive and enjoy it differently.

Perceptions of park quality correlate with higher levels of physical activity and lower body-mass index (BMI) scores, suggesting that park improvements can help promote better health. Measures of perceived quality among users of a public space are therefore effective predictors of community health levels around that space.

4.3.3. Access and Accessibility Foster Equity & Diversity

Access and accessibility are not the same. Access is the means by which a space is entered and the times it may be entered, while accessibility means those elements of design that support equal access to and use of a space for users with disabilities. Both access and accessibility are essential in ensuring that a space is used by diverse groups, supports their various needs, and is equally available to and serving all. Proximity to public open spaces like parks, plazas, and green spaces has numerous health benefits, and people have been shown to be more likely to use public spaces for physical activity if those spaces are of high quality. One study found that people living within a half-mile of a park participate in 38 percent more exercise sessions per week than people who live further away.

4.3.4. Diversity Supports Inclusion

An empty public space is a bad sign. A space performs well when people use it—especially when those people come from diverse groups and interact with each other, which promotes inclusion. Numerous studies have suggested that exposure to people who are different from one's self—including differences in race, sexual preference, or religion—increases tolerance and empathy toward others. Creating spaces that invite a diversity of users helps build a more inclusive and equitable community for all. When approaching a project, it is helpful to find out who is using a space, as well as when and how, to inform design strategy.

4.3.5. Safety and Security Are Increased Through Design Features and Presence of Users

People must feel a space is safe before they use it, yet the presence of people in a space is an important indicator of safety. For example, the presence of women, children, and elderly people in a space makes it seem safer because these groups typically are viewed as more vulnerable to crime. However, people from these groups also need to feel safe to be in the space. Other elements that make a place more attractive and inclusive can also

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make it feel safer. For example, a study of public housing in Chicago found that the presence of physical factors including vegetation and social factors including neighborhood social ties were significantly related to residents' perceptions of safety. Certain design approaches, such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), target that sense of safety. CPTED was developed under the premise that safe space is "defensible space." However, Gehl Institute has found that when spaces are designed to be defensive and uncomfortable to certain groups, they may become unwelcoming to everyone. As such, removing barriers to participation in public spaces and enabling a wider range of people to enjoy the space is key to creating thriving, safer, and more equitable communities. Demonstrated care for and maintenance of a space also influence crime rates. For example, the greening of vacant lots in Philadelphia was associated with consistent reductions in gun assaults for the whole city as well as reductions in vandalism in the area of the city where the lots were located (Gehl Institute, 2018).

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ACTIVE USE

ACCESS AND ACCESSIBILITY

DIVERSITY

SAFETY AND SECURITY

05

HOW TO ACHIEVE INCLUSION?

05 | HOW TO ACHIEVE INCLUSION?

As mentioned in the previous chapters, inclusion is a tool, is a process and is an outcome. In order to achieve inclusion, we followed the same rule in our project. Our Bang the Table platform acted as a tool and catalyst for engagement. It is an accessible, easy to use and navigate platform that incorporates the user's involvement while generating data for the platform managers to review. Our platform has been very effective in tracking user's response to our subsequent engagement strategies that we will discuss in more detail. In addition, our collaboration with Agape students, Beddington Heights Community Association, and Reimagine Beddington have generated the process for how we garner inclusion in our concept. We have also been able to establish and implement inclusion with our efforts throughout our workshops and collaboration with all stakeholders or partners and generate and locate ideas which is the outcome of our project. We will expand on each method we used to achieve inclusion.



5.1. Platform

From commencing this project in early January 2021 to the completion of this report in late April 2021, we have incorporated the use of six various tools available on the Bang the Table platform. As the project has evolved from broad to specific, we have been successful in using the tools available to establish a detailed analysis of the targeted information we were seeking. Bang the Table offers a variety of tools that we have had the opportunity to use in order to engage with participants; again, at different stages of the project we have been eager to pursue different strategies of engagement and have subsequently used various tools. Tools such as: a stories tool where participants respond to a question with a personalized story. We also incorporated an interactive map which allows participants to “pin” locations on the map. Lastly, we incorporated surveys to generate data surrounding the topics we were exploring. Ultimately, the platform was our resource in interacting with the public outside of the times we were able to speak with them. Bang the Table offers a convenient opportunity to establish engagement with an audience, provide reports of the data resulted from engagement, and lastly it is a powerful platform in aiding and steering a project forward with its various opportunities.

5.1.1. Feedback Survey

This survey was one of the first tools we incorporated on the platform to kick-start engagement. At the time we had not yet established a clear direction for our project, but we were eager to begin the engagement process while establishing some excitement for the platform and data for us as well. Our goal with the Feedback survey was to use it as an ice breaker. Alone the survey provided little data, however, it was meant to let users of the platform establish comfort navigating the platform and its various tools and windows. This survey also proved to be very useful in our understanding of the community’s engagement levels, excitement, and general interest. There were 11 responses to this survey. The four questions for the survey were:

1. How long have you been living in Beddington Heights?

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2. What interested you in living in Beddington Heights
3. How do you feel connected to your community?
4. 5 years from now, what does Beddington Heights look like? Any significant changes?

5.1.2. Stories

In our first meeting with the Agape students, we wanted to ensure they felt comfortable and confident using the platform prior to introducing larger more involved tools such as surveys or maps. We used the stories tool to introduce the platform as an “ice breaker” to the Agape students. Because engagement is based on feedback and data, we knew we wanted to incorporate a question or questions that could still be useful data, but we wanted to prioritize a gentle introduction to not overwhelm the students. It is especially important to consider that the students from Agape are English Second Language students, many whom immigrated in the last few years and have substantial language barriers. It was very important for us to consider this when planning any engagement with the students.

Through our introduction of ourselves and the project we are completing we wanted to set a foundation for the project and engagement ahead. The stories tool was a perfect tool. We were able to post a question related to the topic of interest we had introduced during our workshop, and have the students complete their personalized stories, or responses, outside of the workshop. The question we posted is below. We had 22 responses.

- In the past when visiting a public gathering space, what was your favourite part?

There were 22 stories published on the platform. We used the information generated by these stories to guide our next workshop, structure questions for future interaction and surveys, and lastly it really helped establish a comfort between the participants and ourselves.

5.1.3. Public Space Survey

The Public Place Survey was the survey we designed for the second workshop we had with the Agape students. The intent behind this survey was definitely data driven. We wanted to bridge the connection between the Beddington Heights Community Association and the Agape students. As a side note, it was important for us to establish a meaningful connection with the Agape students and the Community Association so that after we completed our project, they were able to stay connected. Throughout the creation of this survey, we wanted to test our hypothesis with the students. The hypothesis was that the students had little to no information regarding public events and engagement from the Community Association, did not know where to find this information, and lastly did not feel fully welcome or invited in the engagement process all while having the desire and want to be apart of the events and engagement. Ultimately, upon completion of this survey it became clear that our hypothesis and predictions were true. This 28 question survey seems to be overwhelming with the number of questions yet proved to be very effective as the questions were brief and articulated valuable information. Here is a list of the questions included in the survey:

1. What is your first name?
2. What year did you move to Calgary?
3. Do you live in Beddington Heights?
4. If you don't live in Beddington Heights, which community do you live in?
5. What language(s) other than English do you speak?
6. What is the name of your home country?
7. How do you travel around the city?
8. Have you ever attended any community events in Calgary?
9. If you wanted to go to community events in the past but did not go, why not?
10. If you did not want to go to community events in the past, why not?
11. Would you like to attend community events in the future?
12. If you would not attend community events in the future, why not?

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13. How do you hear about events happening in your community?

14. What is the easiest way for you to find out about what is happening in your community?

15. If information is provided in your native or first language(s) as well as English, it would:

16. What is one word you think of when you think about community gathering place?

17. Do you have community gathering places near where you live?

18. Do you ever visit these community gathering places?

19. If you do not visit community gathering places, why not?

20. If you do visit community gathering places, do you ever go with other people?

21. What types of activities do you like to do in community gathering places when you go by yourself?

22. What types of activities do you like to do in community gathering places when you go with other people?

23. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about community gathering places, community events, or how you find information about thing happening in your community?

Participants are not well informed about events or engagement pertaining the events within the community of Beddington Heights, while their interest levels and desires indicate that they would enjoy or want to attend events or engagement. The 25 respondents provided information which was very valuable not only for our project, but we were also able to share our findings with the Beddington Heights Community Association.

Chart 5.1: Ever Attended Community Events

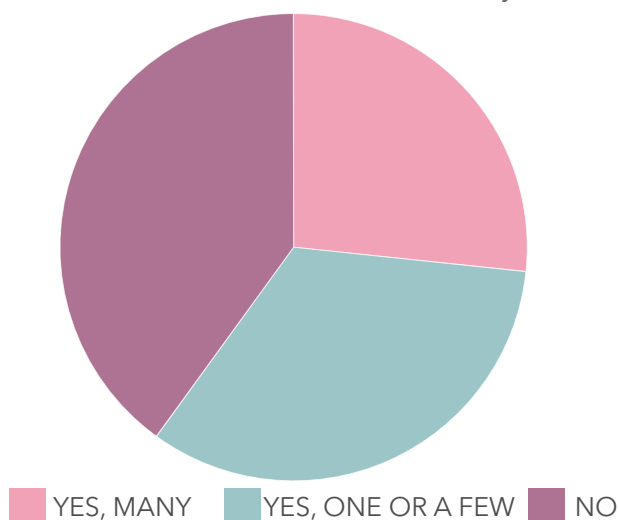


Chart 5.2: Willing to Attend in the Future Events

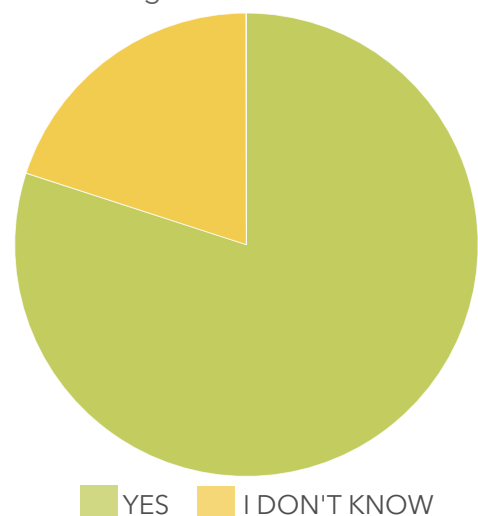
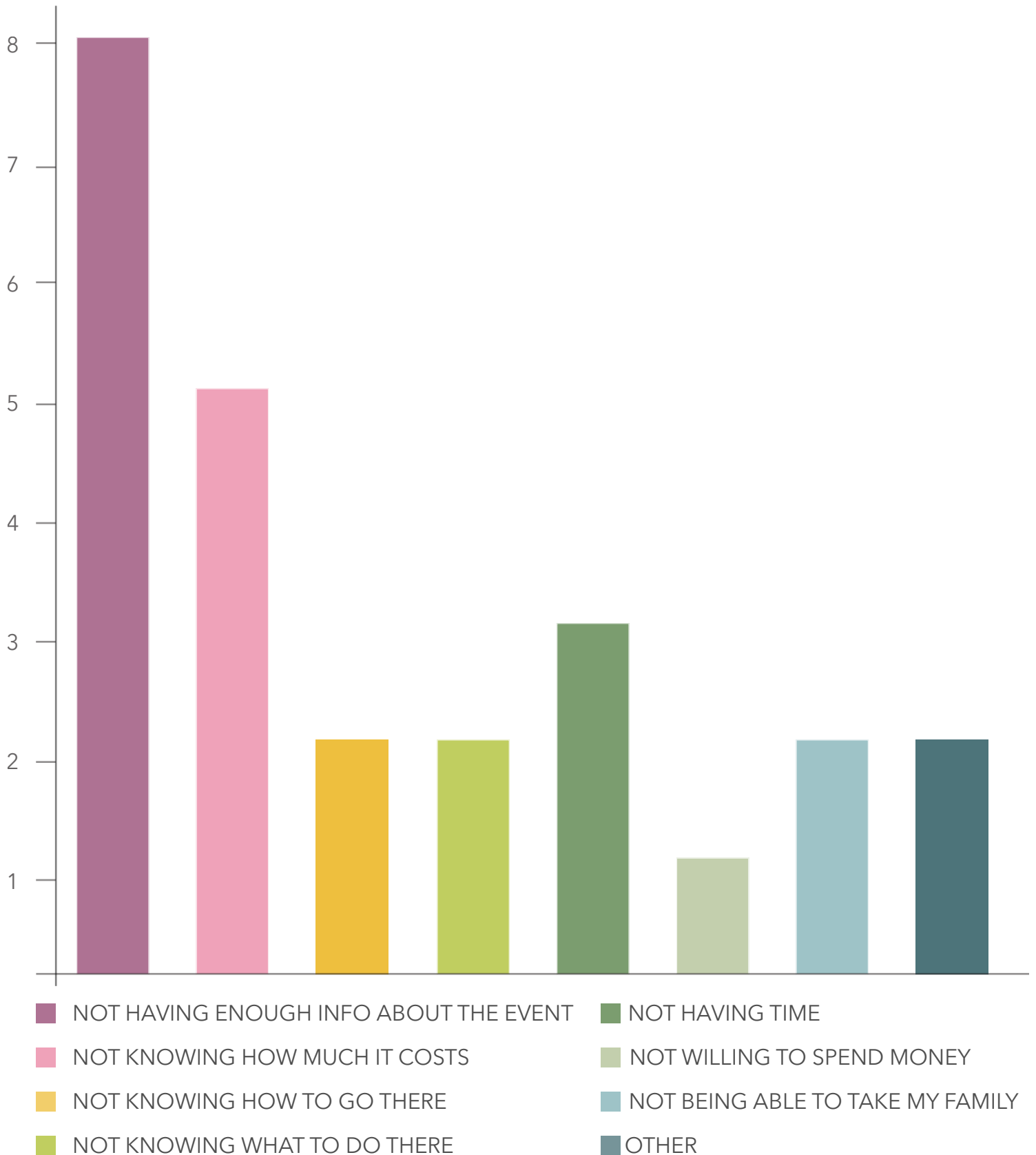


Chart 5.3: Reasons for Not Attending the Events



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5.1.4. Interactive Map

Another fun interactive tool we used was the mapping tool that allows participants the opportunity to interact with the platform in a public way. Participants were able to pin locations on a map of the community of Beddington Heights. Additionally, we created varying pins that represented different themes, so participants were able to pin different locations that represented different things. We used green pins for Parks & Open Space, while red pins were for Activity & Recreation. We also used blue pins for any other desired pin type. Additionally, participants were able to comment or share information about their specific pin to help explain the importance or reasoning of the pin. Lastly, this tool was another great way of creating comfort and user-friendliness for participants as the pins all remained on the map for everyone to see. We had 38 pins and subsequent descriptions of varying locations pinned in Beddington Heights as seen below.

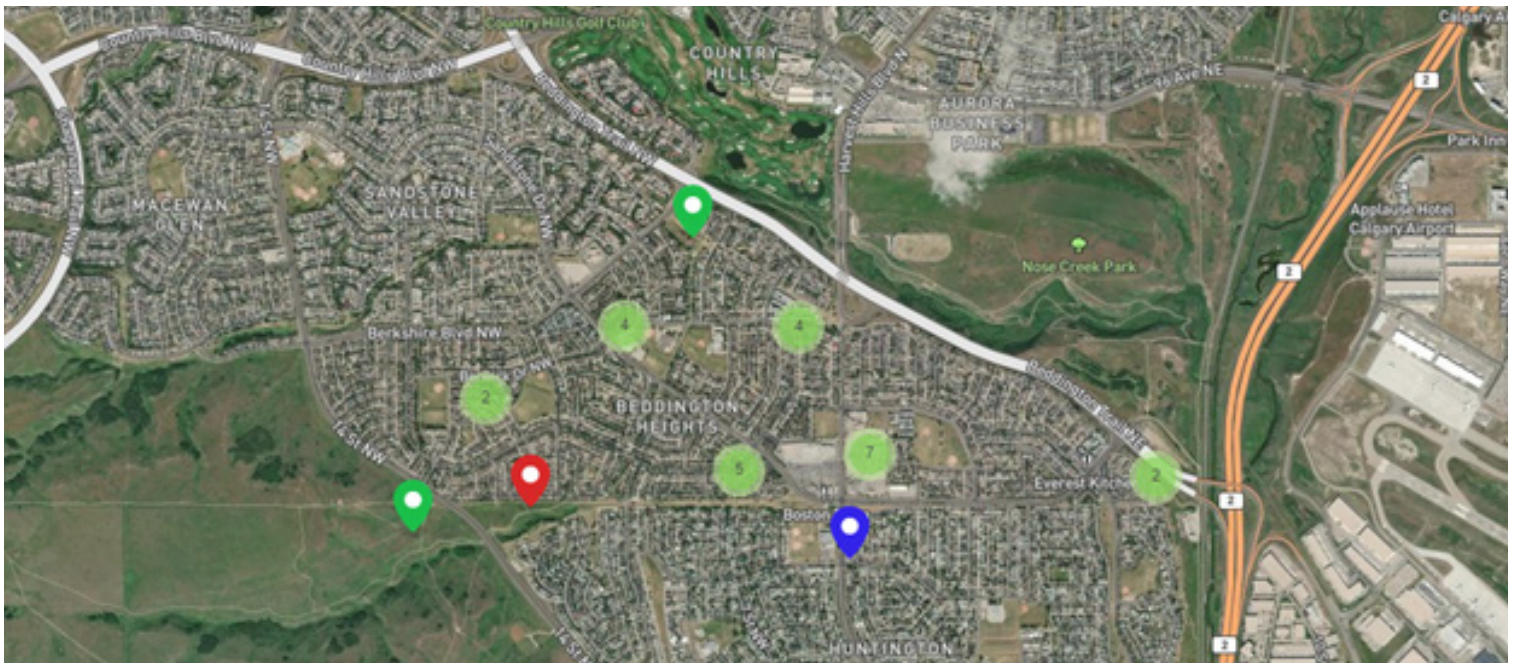


Figure 5.1: Favorite Spots Interactive Map

5.1.5. Community Garden Survey

The final survey that we utilized and provided to the Agape students was a collaborative effort with the Reimagine Beddington Committee to generate results specific to the proposed community garden. This final survey was to establish information and data as a

result of the relationship we had established with the students. This 12 question survey had over 100 responses and generated specific data that will provide the community association with information to proceed in the next phases of their proposed garden. We were very excited to be involved in a final survey that will extend past our involvement and yield results that may help the community going forward. Additionally, the Agape students were thrilled when they learned their involvement may lead to a built form they may enjoy and visit. The 12 questions were:

1. What is your email address?
2. Where do you live?
3. What is your postal code?
4. What is your level of support for our new community garden?
5. What kind of outcomes would you like to see at the community garden?
6. How would you envision the community garden?
7. How would you like to use the community garden?
8. If you are interested in using this as a community gathering space, what would you use it for?
9. How would you like to get involved with the Beddington Community Garden?
10. If you are using the garden, how often do you think you would use the community garden during the growing season?
11. Are you interested in learning more about the community garden through information meetings?
12. What is your name?

Questions 6 and 7 allowed participants to write responses of their own. Two tables are included below to summarize the data and responses provided by participants.

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How would you envision the community garden?

CATEGORIES					
RESPONSES	BUILT FORM	ACTIVITY	EXPERIENCE	CONCERNS	OTHER
	Individual Plant Beds 11	Grow Food/ Plants 10	Social Connections 10	Vandalism 4	Beehives & Butterflies 2
	Community/ Shared Plant Beds 8	Learn/ Teach How to Grow Food 9	Accessible to the Community 9	Tidiness 1	
	Seating/ Benches 4	Eat Food 1	Welcoming & Friendly 2	Security 1	
	Sand Box for Children 1	Outdoor Social Events 2	Sustainable Practices 1	Garden on Asphalt 1	
	Weatherproof Gardening 1	School Involvement 1		Short Growing Season/ Winter 1	

Table 5.1: Community Garden Public Envision

How would you like to use the communtiy garden?

CATEGORIES					
RESPONSES	BUILT FORM	ACTIVITY	EXPERIENCE	CONCERNS	OTHER
	Individual Plant Beds 1	Learn/ Teach How to Grow Food	Visit/Enjoy Space/ Destination 6		Beehives & Butterflies 1
	Fire Pit 1	Grow Food/ Plants 8	Social Connections 8		Ice Rink 1
		Outdoor Social Events 2	Food Sharing 1		Skate Park 1

Table 5.2: Community Garden Public Preferred Use

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5.2. Collaboration

During our project we facilitated four workshops. Our efforts with the workshops were to garner meaningful data driven results from interactions and surveys or various tools used but prioritize the interests of the participants without overwhelming them. From the first to the fourth workshop, we tried to generate more specific and targeted information. These workshops acted as a catalyst for our next phase of implementing the design ideas within the community based on the feedback and engagement provided by the students. We had four workshops with Agape' students. In our first meeting with the Agape students, we wanted to ensure they felt comfortable and confident using the platform prior to introducing larger more involved tools such as surveys or maps. We used the stories tool to introduce the platform as an "ice breaker" to the Agape students. Because engagement is based on feedback and data, we knew we wanted to incorporate a question or questions that could still be useful data, but we wanted to prioritize a gentle introduction to not overwhelm the students. It is especially important to consider that the students from Agape are English Second Language students, many whom immigrated in the last few years and have substantial language barriers. It was very important for us to consider this when planning any engagement with the students. The Public Place Survey was the survey we designed for the second workshop we had with the Agape students. The intent behind this survey was definitely data driven. We wanted to bridge the connection between the Beddington Heights Community Association and the Agape students. As a side note, it was important for us to establish a meaningful connection with the Agape students and the Community Association so that after we completed our project, they were able to stay connected. Throughout the creation of this survey, we wanted to test our hypothesis with the students. The hypothesis was that the students had little to no information regarding public events and engagement from the Community Association, did not know where to find this information, and lastly did not feel fully welcome or invited in the engagement process all while having the desire and want to be a part of the events and engagement. Ultimately, upon completion of this survey it became clear that our hypothesis and pre-

dictions were true. This 28 question survey seems to be overwhelming with the number of questions yet proved to be very effective as the questions were brief and articulated valuable information. The 21 respondents provided information which was very valuable not only for our project, but we were also able to share our findings with the Beddington Heights Community Association. Lastly, we presented a survey to the students that aims to establish specific data related to the proposed community garden. In the final workshop we generated 30 ideas with people's engagement that would be covered in the implementation phase of the project.

5.3. Implementation

In the implementation phase and through collaborating with the Agape students, we have developed the following main themes that present opportunities for the Beddington Heights Community Association going forward.

Based on these main themes, 30 ideas are generated and located within the community. After we developed the main ideas and later the main themes, we wanted to use that information and translate it into opportunities we could present back to the Community Association.

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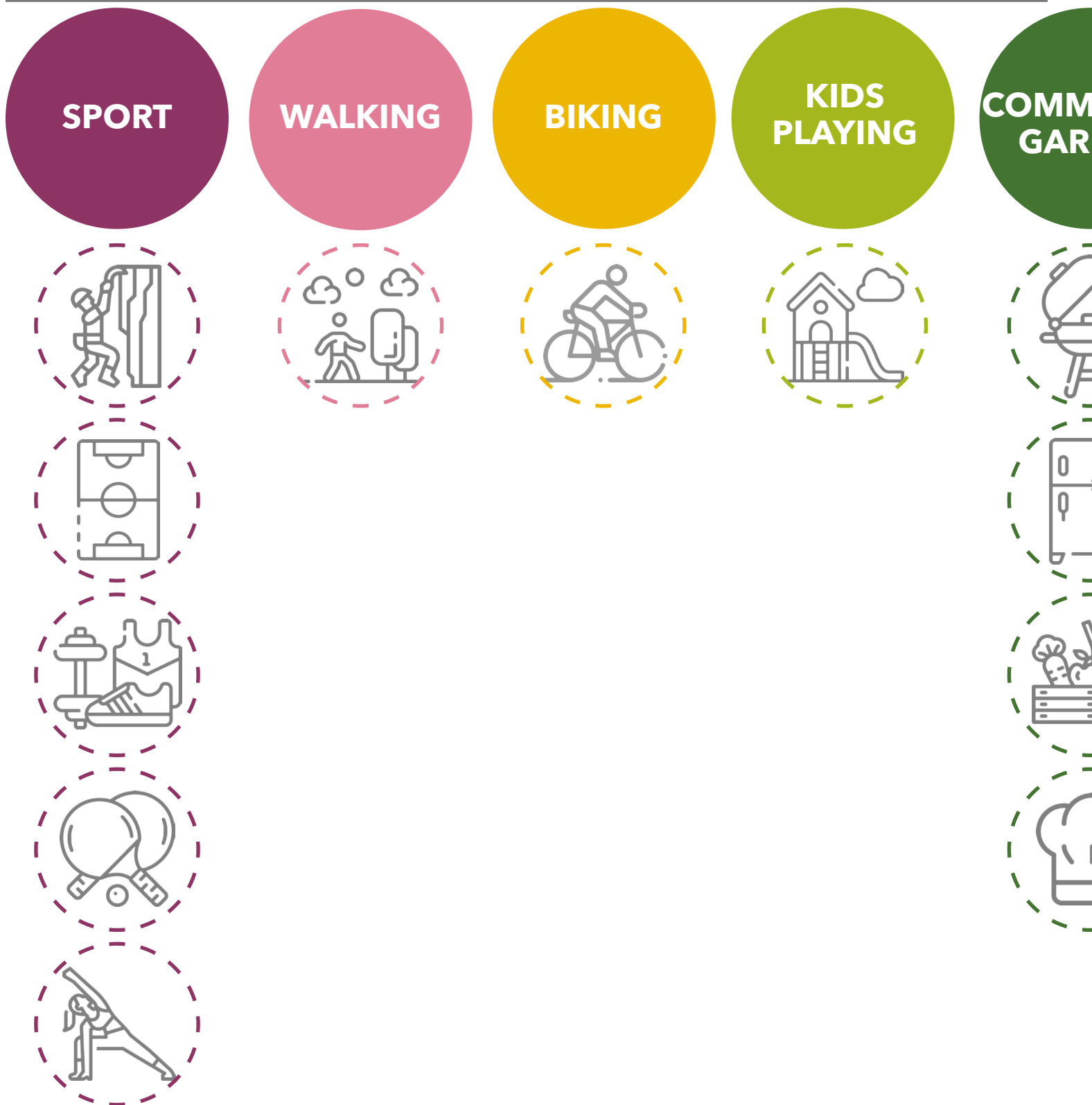


Figure 5.2: Ideas Generated at Public Workshop

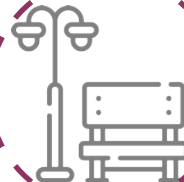
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5.3.1. Sport

Sport or activity was a very common response and desire among the participants. Upon receiving the ideas, we were able to collaborate to map out how these ideas may transfer to the built form and environment. The participants of the workshop suggested many sport-related ideas and providing sport facilities, climbing walls, outdoor yoga, table tennis and football pitch were among public ideas for improving the public spaces for this purpose. We also discussed where they would like to see those facilities and they suggested the public places that can be accessed by walking. As a result, Backyard parks have been suggested as the best places for sport facilities because of their accessibility for the public.



Figure 5.3: Sport Ideas Generated by Public Workshops

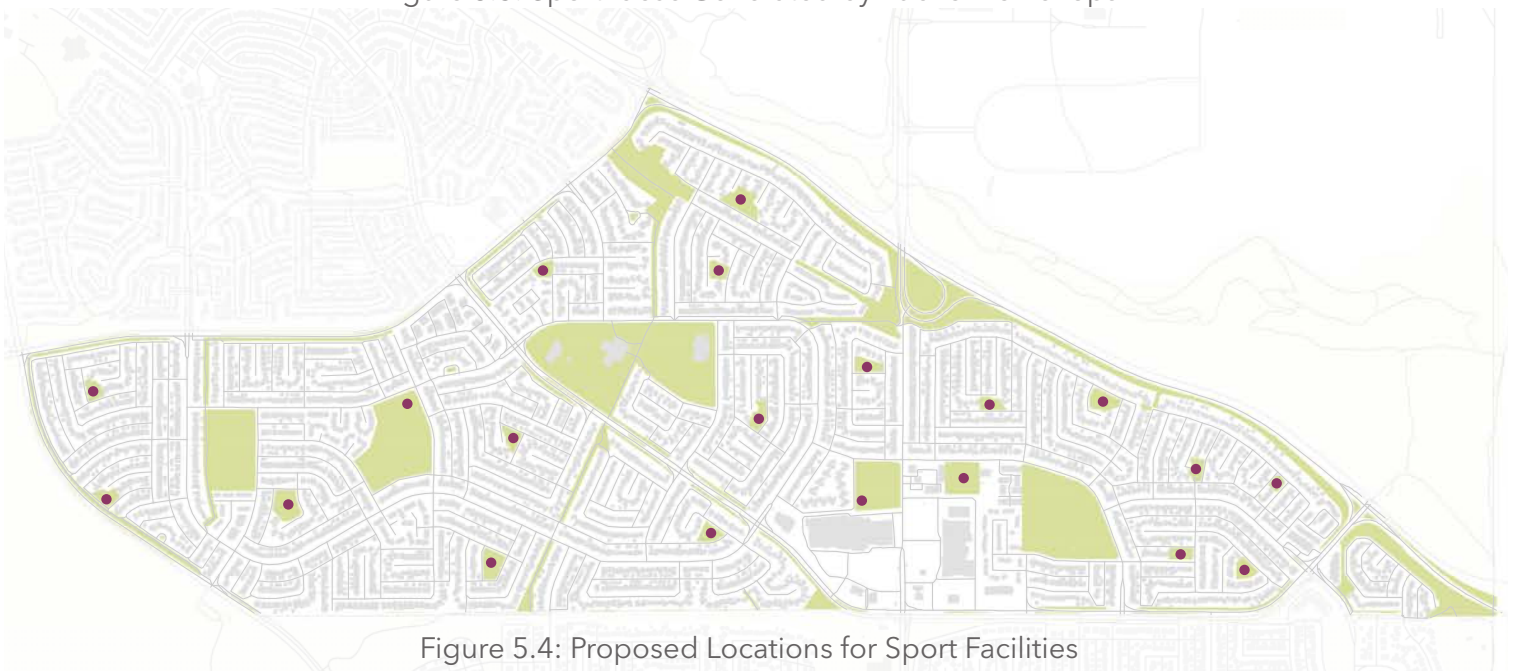


Figure 5.4: Proposed Locations for Sport Facilities

5.3.2. Walking

Walking was another popular response, specifically due to the proximity to public parks in the area such as Nose Hill Park. We identified existing trails, and proposed new ones based on feedback and engagement.

Walking between and to the entertainment and commercial node and green spaces were mentioned by the public and we tried to locate their ideas on the map using their help and feedback.

Beautification of sidewalks, providing more trees and improving the lighting were among the ideas that would encourage people to walk in the community.



Figure 5.5: Type of Walking Trails



Figure 5.6: Proposed and Existing Locations of Walking Trails

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5.3.3. Biking

Such as walking, biking has also been popular among the participants. They would like to bike within the community and to the parks and public spaces and even for shopping. We identified the existing bikeways and expand them throughout the community using the public feedback. They can be shared with the walking trails and streets and also combined with green pathways existing in the community.



Figure 5.7: Type of Biking Trails



Figure 5.8: Proposed and Existing Locations of Biking Trails

5.3.4. Kids Playing

With a majority of our respondents being adults, many had children. As such, playgrounds were a very common topic both for revitalization and proposed new areas. Again backyard parks were suggested for playgrounds due to their accessibility.



Figure 5.9: Type of Playgrounds

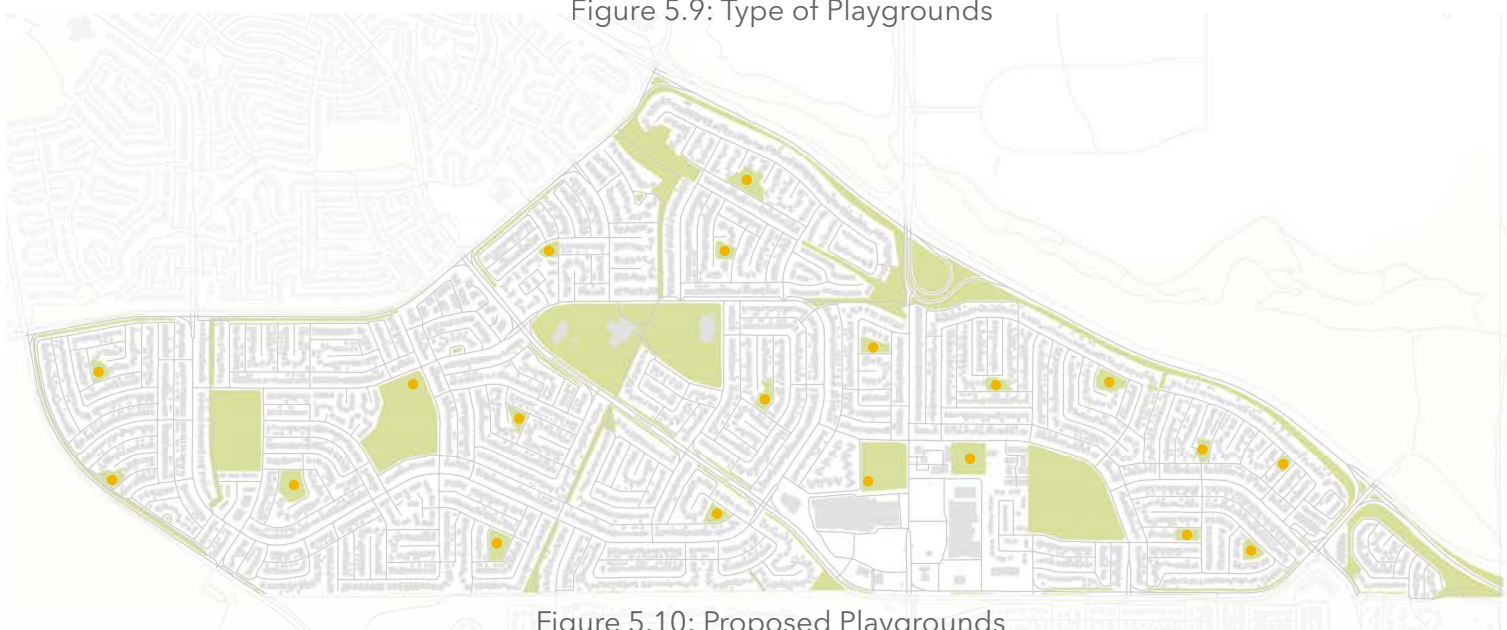


Figure 5.10: Proposed Playgrounds

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5.3.5. Public Events

Public events were challenging to concentrate attention to. We found that there was a need to focus on the location of where these events could take place just as much as figure out what kind of events were being proposed. Public festivals, music festivals, painting festivals for kids and adults, outdoor yoga and dance groups and food festivals are the public events suggested by the workshop participants. In order to locate these events, more spacious public places including Community and Neighborhood parks have been suggested to attract more people.



Figure 5.11: Type of Public Events

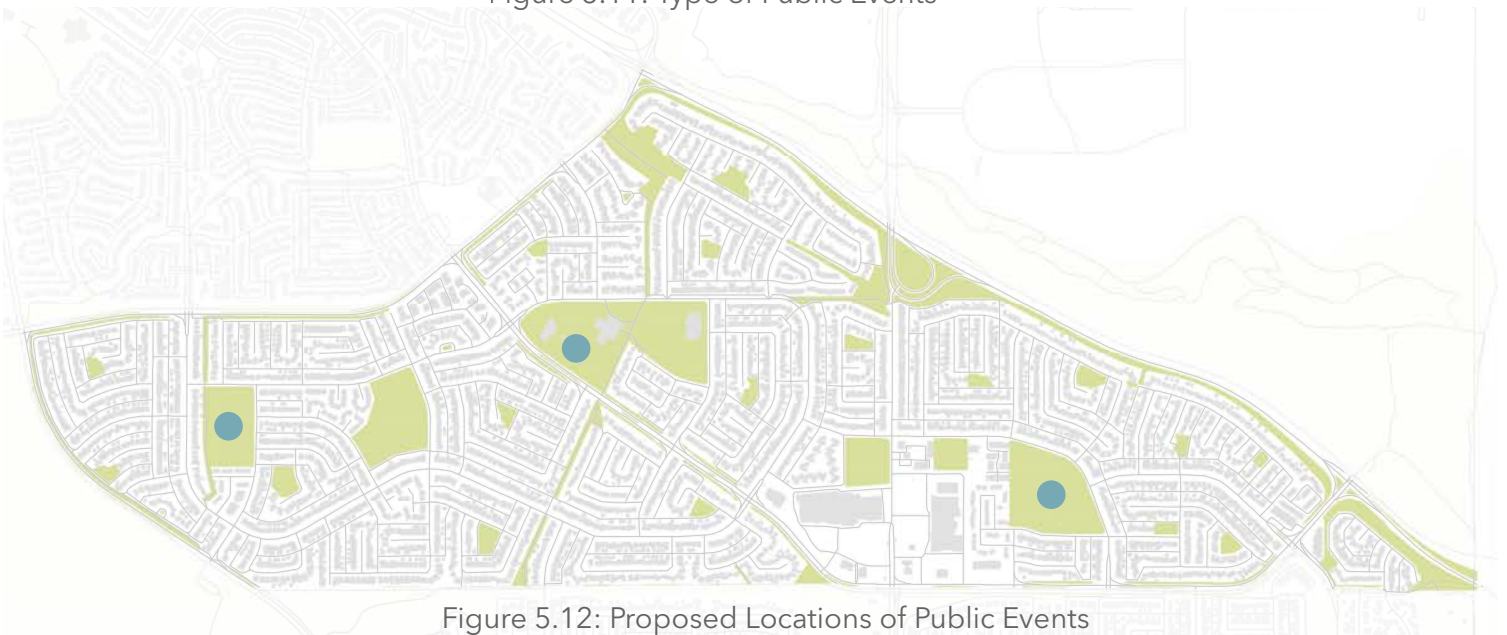


Figure 5.12: Proposed Locations of Public Events

5.3.6. Community Garden

The community garden was a centre piece in our project as the Reimagine Beddington board was eager to establish feedback and engagement with their proposed garden. Having had their support and insight we were able to translate information and explain the ideas associated with the public garden to yield the best responses possible.

Many were interested in food sharing programs, community kitchens or fridges, and community BBQ's and Farmers' Market. We also had a specific survey about the community garden which was open to both our target group and other residents of the community. The results are already covered in the report.



Figure 5.13: Type of Uses at Community Garden

5.3.7. Access to Information

One of the main issues that our target audience had mentioned in the surveys was not having enough information about the public events of CA programs for the community. We discussed this in our workshop to come up with some ideas in order to tackle this

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problem. An innovative idea was to create an application for the community that the news about the community would be published online through this app and it can be translated in to different languages to tackle the language barrier. Using banners on the sidewalks, catalogues and brochures on buses, receiving online newsletters and providing small library stands for sharing the information were other ideas generated by the public. The community association is also offering honorary membership to Agape' students in order to keep them more involved in the CA programs in the community.



Figure 5.14: Type of Access to Information

5.3.8. Covid

Covid is another large topic that we discussed. Understanding the various experiences people have throughout the pandemic and how they are able to react is an important aspect in making improvements. Only if these people are able to be involved in engagement and collaborate with their community, is the community able to implement changes

or improvements. Having Outdoor events while considering health protocols and also community collective healing projects to help people who feel isolated are some of the ideas that were generated through the workshop.



Figure 5.15: Type of Community Programs for Covid

5.3.9. Improving Existing Public Spaces

Our final discussion in the workshops was how to improve the existing public spaces. There were many ideas and the most important ones were improving the furnishing and natural landscape, a dog park, picnic area, and food and ice cream truck.



Figure 5.16: Ideas for Improving Public Spaces

The following table shows how these ideas are responsive to the criteria of inclusive public space which were mentioned in the previous sections. Although almost all these ideas are indirectly responsive to the criteria, we tried to include the most relevant ones in the table. The ideas that include all criteria seem to have a higher priority to be implemented in the community.

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	Health and Wellbeing	Active Use	Access & Accessibility	Diversity	Safety & Security
Sport Facilities	●	●		●	●
Biking	●	●	●	●	●
Climbing Wall	●	●		●	●
Outdoor Yoga	●	●		●	●
Table Tennis	●	●		●	●
Football Pitch	●	●		●	●
Playground	●	●	●	●	●
Dog Park	●	●		●	
Walking	●	●	●	●	●
Picnic	●	●	●	●	●
Furnishing	●	●	●	●	●
Food & Ice Cream Truck		●		●	●
Food Festival	●	●		●	●
Public Events	●	●		●	●
Farmers' Market	●	●		●	●
Community Kitchen	●	●		●	
Community Fridge		●		●	
BBQ		●		●	
Outdoor Festivals	●	●		●	●
Improving Landscape	●	●	●	●	●
Music Festivals	●	●		●	●
Painting Festivals	●	●		●	
Collective Healing Event	●			●	
Small Libraries			●	●	
Information App	●	●	●	●	●
Banners in the Street			●	●	
Cataloges in Buses			●	●	
Newsletters			●	●	
BHCA Membership			●	●	
Covid Safety Protocols	●	●	●	●	●

Table 5.3: Assessing Public Ideas Based on Inclusive Public Spaces Criteria

5.4. Policy Plan

Based on the public ideas and our analysis we have proposed a policy plan which can provide the community association with an approach for the future developments in the community. Firstly there are two main nodes in community which are entertainment node and commercial node. Based on public workshops people tend to walk and bike to and between these two nodes. Also there are bus stops between these nodes connecting them through public transit. Having biking and walking trails in this street along with public transit can provide the opportunity to develop a complete street in this corridor. Moreover, the future green line LRT would pass through the community and would be a great chance for transit oriented development connecting the commercial node of the community to the other areas. The walking and biking trails within the community can be designed to be a green corridor connecting Nose Hill Park and Nose Creek Parkway encouraging people to walk and bike between these two parks and provide opportunities for social interactions. Moreover, having a variety of public spaces would be beneficial for the time of pandemic giving people many options to enjoy the public spaces and prevent isolation while practicing physical distancing.

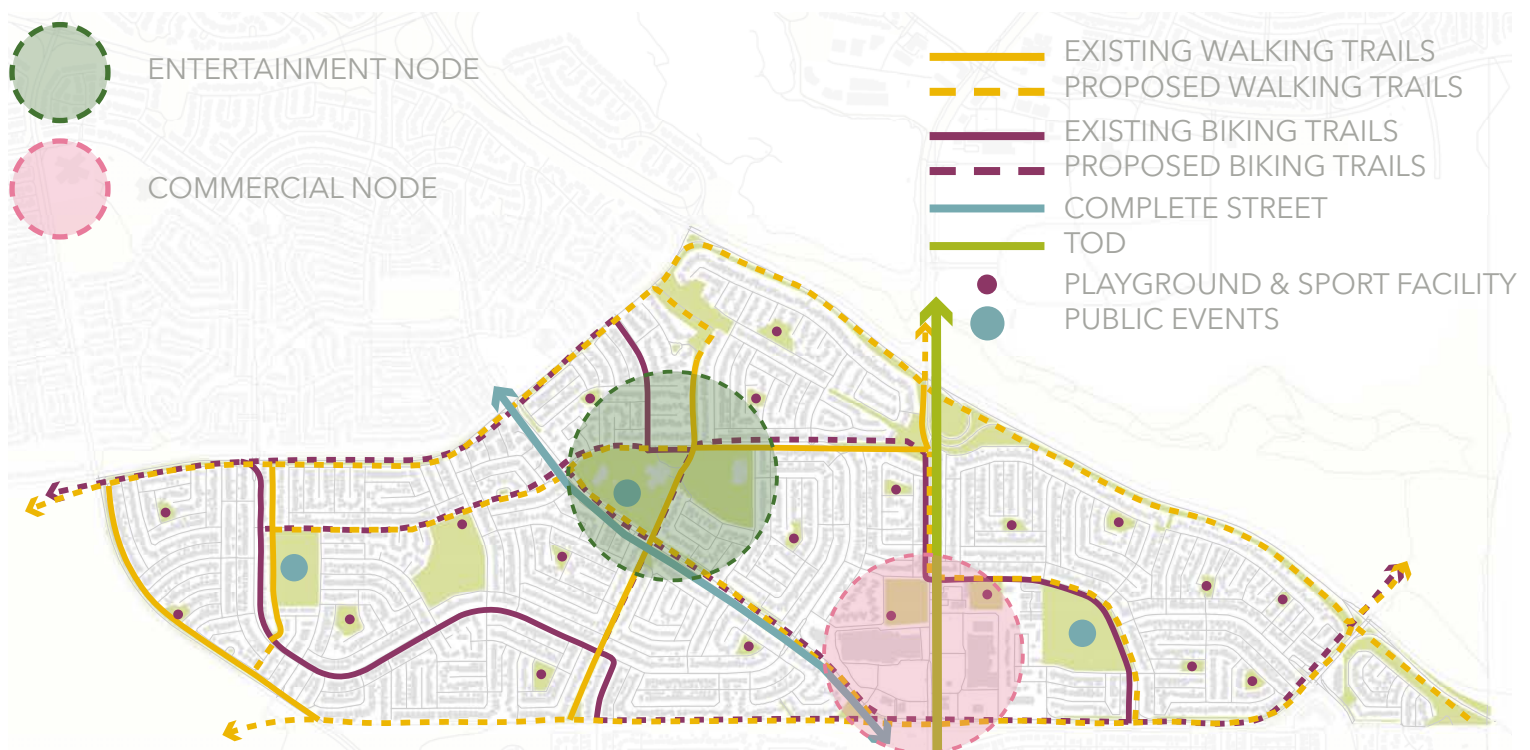


Figure 5.17: Policy Plan

06

REFLECTION

06 | REFLECTION

6.1. Agape Students

We were successful in connecting with an audience of individuals who belong to a community school program that are underrepresented, unaware, and uninformed of much, if any at all, community engagement and processes going on where they live. Going into our first workshops with these students, many of whom are recent immigrants to Canada, we hypothesized that many of the students have not had opportunities to engage or participate in their community in Calgary, or in their homelands. Yet, when understood the opportunities available and the potential involvement they can have, we predicted that there would be an interest and desire to be involved. Through four separate workshops and various engagement activities, we were able to confirm this hypothesis. These students were thrilled to be involved in the opportunity to share their opinions, feedback, and more with the Community Association of Beddington Heights. Language barriers are not to be blamed on these residents for the lack of engagement with their community association. What was clear was efforts to reach out and make these residents comfortable and invited to be involved was missing in the community of Beddington Heights. Prior to our interactions many, if not all of these students were unaware of any opportunities to be involved. We saw this as an opportunity to bridge the connection of residents, like these students, with the Community Association by asking what methods would be most effective in establishing a relationship and generating engagement for them to participate. Access to information was a reoccurring trend in responses we received. When seeking participation, whether it is the community association or someone else, efforts to connect with all audiences must be made. These efforts might include using various platforms for engagement (ex. BangTheTable), physical/in-person interactions, online communication (ex. Emailing), online or hard copy community newsletters, etc.

6.2. SAPL Team

Our reflection on the process and the accomplishments we were able to reach has been far from linear. Each step of this assignment/project has been an evolving and dynamic process. As ideal as we were in expecting a linear process and result, we found that when

collaborating with stakeholders it is critical to be fluid and accommodating to garner the best results possible. Between working with the Community Association and the subcommittee of Reimagine Beddington, to working with the students, and having our own ideas, it was a balancing act, and a lot of effort and time went into aligning everyone's interest. Our reflection lies upon the fact that inclusion is vital in engagement and should be a staple in all efforts within the industry and communities. It is hard work and takes time, however, establishing relationships and connections will prove to be beneficial and effective for the future.

6.3. Community Association

When we launched our platform and compiled research of the community engagement in Beddington Heights we quickly understood there was very participation and involvement. Our reflection on the community association is that they desire to generate excitement within residents to want to engage. It is difficult to establish the desired excitement through the limited opportunities and practices that were being done by the Community Association. Our involvement with the online platform and workshops with Agape students generated a large amount of engagement that was not existent before. Leaving the CA excited for the future to see how they are able to involve and incorporate the platform into their engagement strategies.

6.4. Professional

When reflecting on the industry, there is a sense from many examples that engagement is simply a process and a requirement. Nothing more than a box to check on an application or a process to say was completed to move on to other requirements of approval. Much of the industry sees engagement as a challenge that serves little benefit, costs money, and takes up time. It is an entire additional conversation to highlight the importance and value of quality engagement from the industry. Quality over quantity is something to remember for engagement and ensuring that all efforts are made to incorporate and involve all of those who wish to participate is very important.

07

**COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT**

07 | BHCA STATEMENT

The Beddington Heights Community Association (BHCA) and Reimagine Beddington Committee were very excited to work with Mina and Alex on the Co-Creating Beddington Heights Community project for this iteration of the Design Studio. At past engagement events (2018-2019), residents often stated desires for more gathering spaces and a community garden. In mid-2020, Reimagine began thinking about engagement during a pandemic, planning and funding for a future 'Community Hub', which includes a community garden and space to gather.

Beddington Heights has a significant population of residents with diverse ethnocultural identities and languages, which the BHCA is committed to engage with more in multiple respects. This is a large task, and we need to start somewhere. The Co-Creating project was an opportunity for us to connect with a sector of this population (i.e., adult Newcomers/Immigrants who are English language learners) by leveraging the Agapé Language School. Agapé is one of few organizations in the city that provides these important services, so people from all over the city attend the school and spend time in the area. This sector is often overlooked and/or under-represented in municipal city planning outreach and decision making due to systemic, economic, language, and social barriers. We are trying to identify and mediate the specific barriers for more equitable and representative participation related to the development of the Hub, and beyond.

Our goals for the Co-Creating project were to:

- begin a dialogue with Agapé for current and future collaboration/engagement;
- introduce concepts such as community association, city planning, public outreach, and community gathering places and community gardens, to people who may not have that knowledge already;
- hear Agapé students' perspectives about how they use public spaces, level of interest in participating in events, and communication preferences; and
- identify and establish practical next steps for the BHCA to continue cultivating the rela-

tionship with Agapé for the benefit of groups both organizations serve.

Once built, we will invite Agapé to use the Hub with their students, to grow food, socialize, and meet other Beddington residents. We hope the Hub will provide a welcoming, casual, safe, place for everyone to gather, share, and build a sense of belonging and community. We are working towards beginning construction this year and opening in spring 2022.

This experience and the information collected has provided BHCA and Reimagine data and perspectives we need to meaningfully inform the next stages of planning for the Hub. It has also helped identify opportunities to enhance and extend our reach, communication strategies, and relationships with community partners so we may be more effective and inclusive.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the Alex, Mina, and Fabian for this project, and for the conversations and knowledge sharing with other community associations also participating this term.

Alicia Ta

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Co-Chair, Reimagine Beddington Committee

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