

Report to Edmonton's Jewish Community

June 4, 2014

Our Mandate

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton struck a committee to explore possibilities for a Jewish community centre. Committee members are Debby Shocter (CEO), Stephanie Hendin (Federation president), Clive Oshry (committee chair), Shane Asbell, Ellery Lew, Sharon Marcus, Elaine Romanovsky, Marshall Shocter, Chloe Soibelman. This is the committee's summary report. In alignment with the committee's principle of transparency materials are available for viewing at www.jewishedmonton.org/facilities.aspx

What We Did

We engaged Cambridge Strategies Inc. to help us design and implement a community consultation. We convened 26 small group sessions from December 2013 to April 2014, engaging in meaningful conversation with 222 members of the Jewish community. The process was open to everyone from the community to participate and/or host a group meeting. Those who were unable to attend a meeting were given the opportunity to submit their contribution via mail and email. We discussed what brought people to Edmonton, aspects of their Jewish life in the community, and their expectations of community life.

What We Heard

A rich and meaningful Jewish cultural life is essential to well-being and a sense of belonging. Though small, the Jewish community needs stronger leadership to ensure it remains inclusive, reflecting the diversity of the Jewish community's many origins. While synagogue life is vibrant, there is a strong desire for a central, non-denominational Jewish centre with rich programming. The current generation of community leadership is seen as stewards of the \$4.8 million proceeds from the sale of the former JCC, which ought to be used to abet the quality of life of future generations.

What We Found

There is no clear definition of "central," although there is broad agreement on ease of access to a community centre. People also are open to programming being offered in more than one location, but do not see a need for more than one community centre.

What We Recommend

We recommend three to four larger community meetings this fall to crystallise the results of this consultation. We aim to reach a broader community consensus on how best to move ahead in meeting the community's needs.