

Submission to:  
Edmonton Catholic  
Schools District

Edmonton

**Community Impact  
Statement:  
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel  
School Partial Closure**

January 17, 2022

## COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT: OUR LADY OF MT CARMEL SCHOOL PARTIAL CLOSURE

### Background

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School is a Kindergarten to Grade 9 School operated by the Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD) at 10524-76 Avenue, Edmonton. It is the designated community K-9 school for ECSD families in 12 mature neighbourhoods comprising a large area of south-central Edmonton. It is also home to a specialized Sports Academy program that serves students from across Edmonton who wish to combine academic study with extensive participation in sports.

On November 24, 2021, the Board of Trustees of the ECSD voted to begin the formal process to partially close Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. That same day, by letter from Board Chair Sandra Palazzo to Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, ECSD notified the City of Edmonton of the proposed partial closure and invited the submission of this Community Impact Statement. The proposed closure would discontinue programs at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel for students in Grades 7, 8 and 9. Students in these grades, for whom Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is their designated community school, will be redesignated to either St. Brendan, a K-9 school located at 9260-58 Street, or to Louis St. Laurent Junior Senior High School at 11230-43 Avenue. The students from across the City who are now enrolled in the Sports Academy program will have the option of attending their designated ECSD school or (subject to eligibility) choosing another school district or other specialized city-wide program. This year, there are 67 students enrolled in Grades 7-9 at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

If ECSD discontinues the junior high program at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, the school will remain open as a K-6 school. As a result, there will be two Edmonton Catholic Junior High Schools in all of the [Mature Neighborhoods](#) south of the River: St. Brendan and Louis St. Laurent.

As with previous Community Impact Statements, the City of Edmonton refrains from commenting on the impact that this partial closure may have on the educational experience. The purpose of this document is not to make a recommendation about whether to proceed with this partial closure or not. Its purpose is to identify certain community impacts and their relevance to the City's strategic goals in the hope that this perspective will assist the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Catholic schools as they grapple with a very difficult decision.

## CITY OF EDMONTON PLANS AND STRATEGIES

The following City strategies and policies are relevant to assessing the community impact of the possible closure of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel school.

### The City Plan

Edmonton City Council approved the City Plan in 2020. The City Plan combines a Municipal Development Plan and a Transportation Master Plan, and includes strategic direction in environmental planning, social planning and economic development. It sets strategic direction for the way Edmonton grows, its mobility systems, open spaces, employment and social networks, generally touching on most aspects of life in Edmonton.

The “Five Big City Moves” are an invitation for Edmontonians to work together to build a great city. Among those aspirational goals is a vision of Edmonton as a Community of Communities.

A Community of Communities: A Community Of Communities is about making big city life feel less anonymous and more personal. It’s about welcoming new residents and developing housing, recreation, schools and employment in all of our districts that can be better accessed through all forms of transportation.

Embedded in this vision is the aspirational goal that Edmontonians will have the choice to live in a “15-minute District” where they can meet most of their daily needs without having to travel far.

These concepts, a Community of Communities and the 15-Minute District, are high level strategic goals. They are not to be understood as hard-and-fast quantitative measures. They describe a qualitative state. To the extent that a community contains a range of housing choices, a range of transportation modes, and the things that people need in their everyday lives (such as employment, shopping, schools and other public services) that community is complete and gets us closer to this strategic goal.

Because this is a partial closure and because Our Lady of Mt. Carmel will remain open as a K-6 school, many of the community impacts normally associated with a school closure are not applicable. For example, the school will remain an option for families of elementary-school aged children who choose the Catholic School District. The school will remain open for community use under the Joint Use Agreement and there will be no loss of parks or open space.

The City has a strategic goal of sustaining complete communities in mature areas. There are 12 mature neighbourhoods for whom Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is now the designated Catholic Junior High School. If the junior high program at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is closed, all of these neighbourhoods will be doubly designated to either St Brendan or Louis St. Laurent for Grades 7, 8 or 9 (families in these neighbourhoods will have their choice of these two schools).

If Our Lady of Mt. Carmel ceases to be a Junior High, these four neighbourhoods (Strathcona, Garneau, Queen Alexandra and McKernan) would still be home to three elementary schools (two Public and one Catholic), one Public Elementary-Junior High School and two Public High Schools (one specialized, the other serving a general enrollment). But if this partial closure happens, then Junior High aged students will have to leave the community to receive an Edmonton Catholic Schools education. This cluster of neighbourhoods will still enjoy a high level of community completeness but families may miss the experience of a Catholic Junior High school in near proximity.

As stated above, these four neighbourhoods are named here to illustrate a qualitative community impact. Other communities that are now served by Our Lady of Mt. Carmel as a designated Catholic Junior High will be impacted in a similar way but perhaps to differing degrees and in different ways.

## Conclusion

In planning and delivering Catholic Education, ECSD designates a community school for all City neighbourhoods. If ECSD were to discontinue the use of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel as a Junior High, there would be only two Catholic Junior High Schools in the mature neighbourhoods south of the River. Families in many of the communities now served by Our Lady of Mt. Carmel would have to travel outside the community to access Catholic education for their junior-high aged children. The City thanks ECSD for the opportunity to prepare this Community Impact Statement.