

What We Heard Report:

104 Street Rehabilitation

82 Avenue to
Saskatchewan Drive

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Edmonton has identified 104 Street, between Saskatchewan Drive and 82 Avenue for rehabilitation. The project goals are to address the infrastructure's condition, reduce maintenance costs, and enhance the roadway to ensure the safety of all users. Infrastructure will be upgraded to current City standards.

Given the constraints in the corridor, its established character, and current corridor function, improvements are intended to be small but impactful changes rather than a complete reimagination of the corridor. As part of the rehabilitation project, there is an opportunity to advance the City's strategic goals as outlined in ConnectEdmonton and the City Plan.

The public engagement approach gathered feedback from the public and stakeholders on their use of the 104 Street corridor between Saskatchewan Drive and 82 Avenue. The initial concept plan will be informed by what was learned from stakeholders and the public, along with City policies and plans.

WHAT WE DID

Stakeholder and public engagement included the community of Old Strathcona, property owners, businesses and institutions along 104 Street, and the public who use the corridor to access and visit the area for shopping, festivals, work, and leisure pursuits.

How We Communicated:

- Letters introducing the project and requesting a meeting were hand delivered or couriered to all property owners.
- Email and letters were sent to key stakeholders in the area, such as Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA), Strathcona Community League, Good Neighbours Group, and festival organizers/liaisons.
- Over 10,000 postcards outlining the project and encouraging residents to participate in an online survey were delivered by Canada Post to all addresses in the community of Old Strathcona.
- A road sign promoting the survey was placed along Saskatchewan Drive.
- The Strathcona Community League and OSBA promoted the survey through their newsletters and social media channels.

How We Engaged:

Property owners, business owners/tenants and stakeholders participated in online interviews with the project team. The structured interviews were designed to gather information about road usage, particular insights regarding their property, ideas on improving 104 Street and what they would like to have included in a Concept Plan.

An online survey, provided on the City's Insight Community platform was live for public feedback from January 23 to February 6 2023. The survey was designed to gather participation from community residents and input from the public who travel to 104 Street to work, shop, or pursue leisure activities.

Interviews	Survey Results
14 virtual engagements with stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nine business or community organizations• Five residents	305 respondents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The majority of participants lived in Old Strathcona (68%), were under 55 years of age (60%), and primarily identified as vehicle drivers (79%).

WHAT WE HEARD

There was strong support for the overall project, acknowledging that the street was an essential element in Old Strathcona and warranted attention. People indicated that enhancing the pedestrian experience was important, although they cautioned that retaining the mature trees was a priority.

The following summarizes the key themes emerging from the engagement activities.

Theme #1: Active Transportation

Most people supported the addition of bike infrastructure that would encourage more cyclists in the area.

It's overwhelmingly positive with the new bike lanes, people are thrilled. Straight to the University on a bike lane. They are totally awesome. The ones on 83rd with the concrete median. Also, what is well received, the continuation of the bike path on that green belt that follows the train tracks, that's a real enhancement. The bike network is improving a lot and that's a real plus."

Other responses did not support the addition of bike lanes in the community.

"I don't think this should be a bike lane. Focusing on pedestrian and vehicle traffic is ideal for this particular route. There are numerous other streets that have been transitioned to be more bike friendly. I fear if we reduce vehicle access on this route cars will begin to drive through the neighborhoods more regularly."

While most participants embraced cycling infrastructure, differences emerged when describing the type of walking and biking facilities preferred in the area.

Some people wanted to see an extension of the 'Summer Streets' program with the northbound lane along 104 Street being permanently closed to vehicle traffic.

"We appreciated the widened walking area that gets closed to cars on 104. That's been a wonderful initiative. We see people going by on scooters, bikes, walking dogs, it brings street to life. Lots of people use that space to walk."

Other participants thought the closure of the northbound lane created significant logistical challenges for accessibility to and from businesses and institutions. Several concerns related to serving clients, customers and tenants with mobility requirements that would be unable to navigate the area.

"I think if a bike lane is considered for 104 Street, it would be useful, but I would hate to lose 2-way traffic. It's so hard to maneuver north in the area. There's so many one-way streets to the west, and it's tricky to navigate and it can eat up a lot of time."

"Stop converting 104 Street northbound into pedestrian function from May to November, extremely limited use for this function and jams up traffic at the 104 Street/83 Avenue intersection, especially at rush hour"

Those with a preference for closing the northbound lane to traffic viewed it as a feature of a vibrant, well-designed city.

“People are mad about the loss of convenience but there’s still lots of parking and they still get down here. People need to get used to that, especially in these types of areas.”

Respondents who wanted to keep the northbound lane open emphasized that it was more complicated than just ‘convenience’—the closure would significantly impact their ability to serve members, clients, residents and families.

“The beginning of spring 2020, I was really upset. I had a client who was an amputee, they couldn’t come with the DATS vehicle to drop my client off. There was no parking on the east side of the street, where there has been parking. And there wasn’t on the west, it doesn’t have parking.”

“I get nervous when we talk about eliminating northbound lanes. From a business perspective, it’s bad.”

Along with the support of bike infrastructure was the need to have more bike racks, and options to protect bikes from theft.

Theme #2: Enhancing the Pedestrian Experience

Increasing walkability in the area was a strong preference of participants. There was support for improvements to sidewalks, mainly due to the poor condition of current sidewalks and related drainage issues.

There was a desire to enhance the pedestrian experience, such as wider sidewalks, inclusion of shared pathways, crosswalk lights, and other pedestrian and bike-focused improvements for the area.

“Please improve walkability on 104 street! Yes, while I do commute down it, I would much rather see it as a local improvement area where I can feel safe walking and cycling and taking transit around at the expense of all commuters. It is important to me that Edmonton is designed for people to live, work and play in an area and that it isn’t designed to increase traffic flow like

*everywhere else in the City. This would directly influence my likelihood to stay living in the Garneau area and even in Edmonton itself if this project is done for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and shop owners rather than cars.
Thank you for allowing feedback from a local resident."*

Theme #3: Beautification and Greening

Participants valued the greening of the area, including more boulevard space, preserving or planting new trees, more park space, and more plantings/landscaping. Decorative lighting was suggested to add beauty and functionality to the area, particularly in parks and along walkways.

"I would like to see the trees preserved throughout this project and to have more greenery added to the area as a result thereof."

"More trees/shrubs and other plants would be nice too. Perhaps a rewilding area could be installed. This corridor feels too much like nature has been eradicated with pavement."

Participants advised that any design should prioritize retaining trees and ensuring their ongoing health.

"One thing I stress to my friends, the value of the trees, the height of the trees, gives a different sense compared to the suburbs with no tree cover at all. I always loved the street trees in Edmonton, the way they've been planted and taken care of... mostly."

Theme #4: Patio Space

Participants suggested that they would like more patio space along 104 Street. While there were some concerns about patio space encroaching into pedestrian space and creating accessibility challenges, participants felt that a good design would alleviate those concerns.

"I love patios, they bring a vibrancy to the area. People get excited to see them put up in the spring. I haven't heard issues."

Making room on the street for patios and walkways may pose a challenge, but again, participants felt that a good design could create a solution that worked for pedestrians and diners.

The Purolator guy gets ticked off because they take up some spots. Maybe take away some on street parking and have a courier drop off zone.”

NEXT STEPS

The project team thanks all individuals and groups who participated in public and stakeholder engagement opportunities for the 104 Street rehabilitation project.

As the Arterial Renewal Program received limited funding for the 2023-2026 cycle, the project has been paused and rehabilitation of 104 Street will be delayed to the next budget cycle.

Additionally, acknowledging that 104 Street is a primary corridor in the Strathcona neighbourhood, this rehabilitation work will better align with City strategic objectives when surrounding projects and initiatives are further defined, such as the Mass Transit Study, Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy and vision for Whyte Avenue.

Feedback gathered from the public and stakeholders in this first round of engagement will be considered when the project is restarted in the coming years. For more information, visit the project webpage at edmonton.ca/104StreetSaskDrive.