

What We Heard

Balwin and Belvedere
Transportation
Revitalization Project
October 2023

| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

Overview

The City of Edmonton's Neighbourhood Revitalization program works in partnership with citizens, organizations, and business owners to set neighbourhood goals and achieve results through collaboration and partnership.

The communities of Balwin and Belvedere were selected for Neighbourhood Revitalization in 2018 and co-created the Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy the following year. Further public engagement on capital infrastructure investment priorities took place in 2020 and 2021. The current Revitalization capital investment for parks and roadways is a result of the collaboration between the community capital project team of residents and stakeholders and the City's project team.

The extensive engagement process resulted in the following vision statement:

"Belvedere and Balwin are committed to creating proud, safe and diverse communities that support and value their people and businesses."

This vision statement will help guide the work in the communities.

Community members identified priorities for transportation related capital investments as part of the public engagement process. These include:

- + Improvements to the Fort Road / 66 Street node
- + Improved safety at busy intersections for people walking and wheeling
- + Traffic calming measures
- + Additional lighting in green spaces in both Balwin and Belvedere
- + A gateway feature welcoming people to the community



Table of Contents

Overview	2
The Project / How We Engaged	3
What We Heard: Common Themes	6
Next Steps	10
City of Edmonton Public Engagement Process	11

The Project

The project aims to improve safety, vibrancy, business development, and overall well-being within the community. This project deals specifically with the priorities identified by the community.

The roadway project explored opportunities for temporary traffic calming, permanent landscaping, crosswalks and pedestrian lighting on the following streets:

- + 127 Avenue between 66 Street and 82 Street
- + 128 Avenue between 66 Street and 81 Street
- + 66 Street between 128 Avenue and 130 Avenue

A community gateway/entry feature is also part of the project. The location and the design of the entry feature will be determined through public engagement, technical considerations and City policies and plans.

How We Engaged

Input from stakeholders and the community is key to the success of the Balwin and Belvedere Transportation Revitalization project.

Residents and stakeholders were invited to offer their ideas and input on designs for each corridor including:

- + entry and gateway features and locations
- + location of adaptable temporary traffic calming measures
- + landscaping and additional plantings
- + crosswalk improvements (i.e., curb ramps, raised crosswalks,)
- + changes to on-street parking

There were two rounds of engagement.

The first round gathered feedback and perspectives on the project and provided the project team with ideas and considerations that could be integrated into the Concept Plan. An online Engaged Edmonton webpage and survey was open from November 23, 2022 to January 2, 2023 for residents to share their thoughts on the road improvements. Fifty-nine (59) respondents completed the Engaged Edmonton activity. Business Stakeholders were interviewed virtually and in-person in November 2022.

A Concept Plan was developed following the first round of engagement. The plan was shared with business stakeholders in June 2023 and with the public on July 10, 2023; the team hosted a booth at the KARA Community BBQ and received feedback on the new Concept Plan.



Kara Community Barbeque, Balwin Park

Concept Engagement Methods

Round 1

November 2022–January 2023

- + Seven stakeholder meetings
- + Survey
59 responses

Round 2

June 2023 – July 2023

- + Six stakeholder meetings
- + KARA Kick-off Barbeque
240 conversations

Concept Engagement Round One

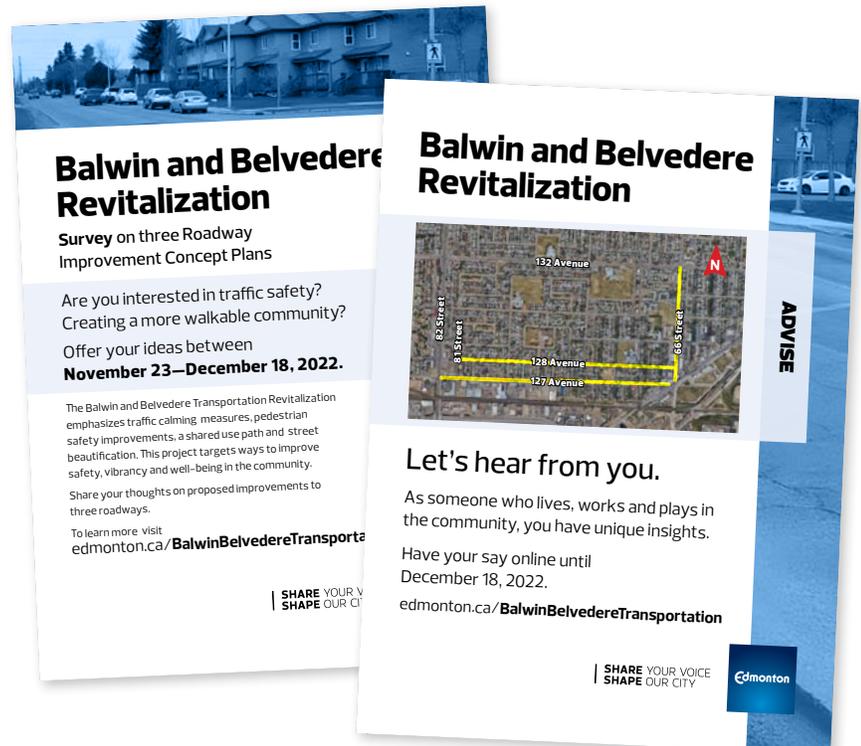
During the first round of engagement the project team gathered various perspectives and feedback in two ways:

- + In-person and virtual stakeholder meetings with businesses, institutions and the Balwin Community League.
- + Virtual engagement for the residents of the community and others interested in the project.

The virtual engagement on the Engaged Edmonton website included a brief survey (open for feedback from November 23, 2022 to January 2, 2023) asking for input on the location and design for an entry feature, and a Miro interactive map of each of the three project corridors which allowed users to pin digital notes to the board explaining their feedback.

How We Communicated

- + Postcards were mailed to all households and businesses in the project area. The postcards introduced the project to the community and encouraged residents and business owners to participate in the survey.
- + Road signs were placed throughout the project area inviting people to have their say and share suggestions for the improvements.
- + Emails and letters were delivered to businesses and institutions along the three corridors.
- + Social media ads to promote the survey were shared.





Kara Community Barbeque, Balwin Park

Concept Engagement Round Two

There were two ways that the project team gathered various perspectives and feedback on the Concept Plan:

- + In-person and virtual stakeholder meetings with businesses and institutions
- + **KARA Kickoff Barbeque:** The KARA Family Resource Centre plays a vital role in the community and has created a strong network of residents and organizations in the two neighbourhoods. The project team joined

them for their second annual community barbeque, which saw approximately 1,200 adults and 800 children enjoy a sunny evening of hotdogs, games, a petting zoo, face painters and balloon artists. The project team was able to talk with over 200 community members and area

users about the traffic calming measures, landscaping, the entry feature design and preferred locations for the feature.



How We Communicated

- + Emails and letters were delivered to businesses and institutions along the three corridors.
- + KARA hand delivered notices to every residence in Balwin and Belvedere. KARA and the City of Edmonton Neighbourhood Revitalization Coordinator promoted the City's attendance through their network and shared social media ads throughout the community.



ADVISE

Share your feedback on
 Balwin Belvedere
 Transportation Revitalization
 Visit us at
 KARA Kickoff Barbeque
 Monday July 10 5-7 p.m.
 Balwin Park 12904-74 Street
Learn more at edmonton.ca/BalwinBelvedereTransportation

SHARE YOUR VOICE
 SHAPING THE CITY

KARA Kickoff

SUMMER BBQ

July 10
5-7pm

Balwin Park, 12904 74St. NW
 FREE Community Event

Bring along a picnic blanket or some folding chairs.
 Non-perishable food donations to support the Edmonton Food Bank are welcome.

Call for more info: 780-478-5396

Petting Zoo
 Face Painting
 Balloon Art
 Outdoor Games
 And more!

What We Heard: Common Themes

Participants responding to the survey in round one and those attending the KARA Kickoff BBQ were enthusiastic about the Balwin Belvedere Revitalization Project. Enhancing the pedestrian realm and beautification of the area with trees and landscaping was strongly supported. Participants highlighted several traffic safety concerns in the area and thought that the Transportation Revitalization ideas would resolve some of the issues, creating a safer environment for pedestrians.

During the first round of engagement, ideas included an adaptable on-street sidewalk along a portion of 127 Avenue. Support for the walkway was mixed among stakeholders. While several businesses were supportive of the overall project they cited safety concerns with large trucks entering and exiting their loading docks. Further operational, maintenance, and safety considerations led to the removal of the adaptable walkway from the project scope. Stakeholders also identified their preference for high canopy deciduous trees, rather than coniferous trees.

While most people were in favour of the traffic calming ideas, a few thought that traffic calming measures could narrow streets too much and cause additional congestion and parking issues.

Both rounds of engagement reinforced that participants supported the idea of an entry feature that welcomed people to their communities.

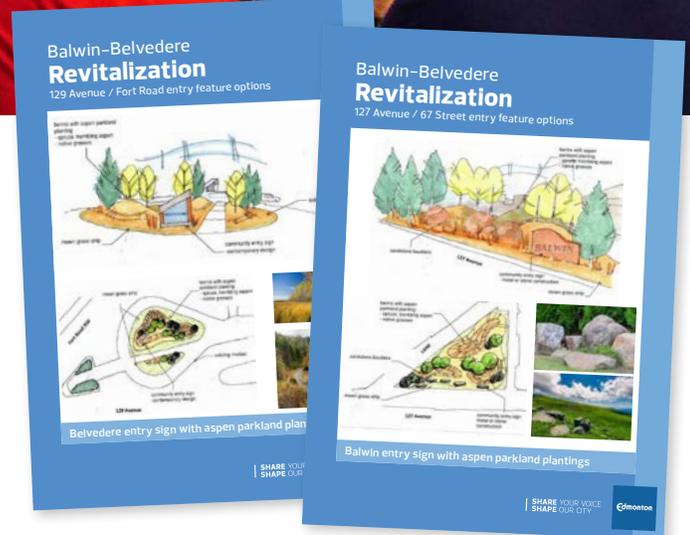
Entry Feature

During the first round of public engagement people chose 66 Street and Fort Road as the favoured location with 66 Street and 131A Avenue being chosen as the second location.

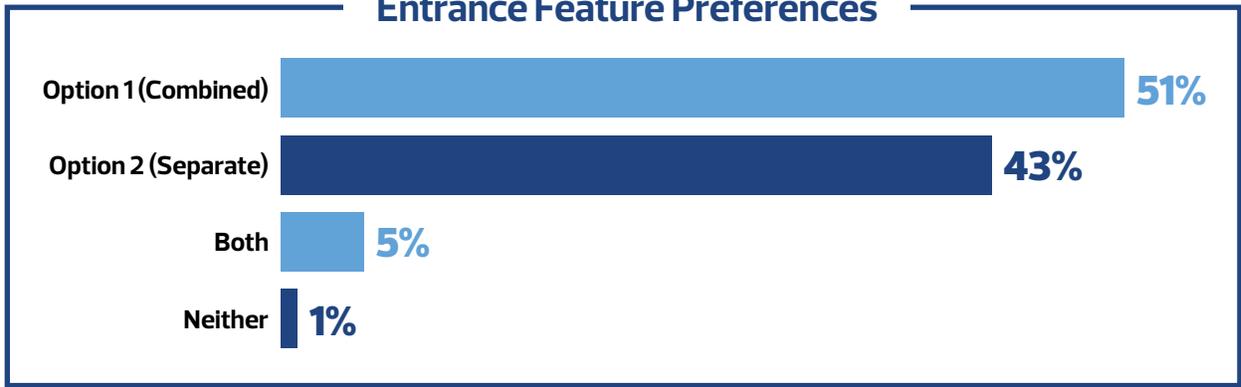
Following the first round of engagement, the land chosen by participants as the preferred location for an entry feature (66 street and Fort Road) was sold to a new owner and could no longer be used as a location for the project.

During the second round of engagement, participants were also asked if they preferred two features—one in each community, or if they would prefer a single-entry feature that represented both communities. Participants were shown cards with entry feature locations and design options on them and discussed the pros and cons of each card with the project team.

The majority of participants favoured the combined feature.



Entrance Feature Preferences



Support for Option One— 66 Street and 131A Avenue Combined Entrance Feature

Support for Option One was due to several factors, with the perception that it would be more visible as the most common response. People also speculated that Option One would be more cost effective and easier to maintain, that it would unite both neighborhoods, and that the flags could be changed to promote different events.

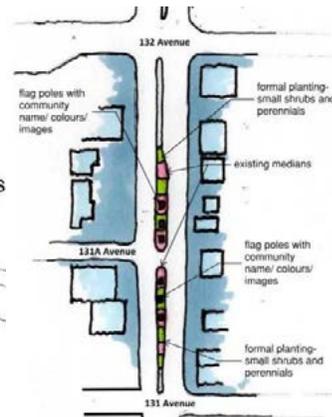


“The 66 St with flag poles is modern and visually attractive. I like the color, and flags could be used to promote community events”

“Why separate the entry features when we can come together? It makes it a better community when we stand together.”



There were concerns with entry features that could block the view of store frontage along 66 Street; the project team was encouraged to design it in a way that allowed visibility to the shopping plaza.



**Support for Option Two—
Separate Entrance Features at 129 Avenue/Fort Road and 127 Avenue/67 Street**



Those who preferred Option Two cited their preference for greenery, trees, and adding more “nature” to the neighborhoods.

“I love this aesthetic; it comes together, and people can enjoy the nature.”

“It shows our beautiful nature, and everything is better outside”

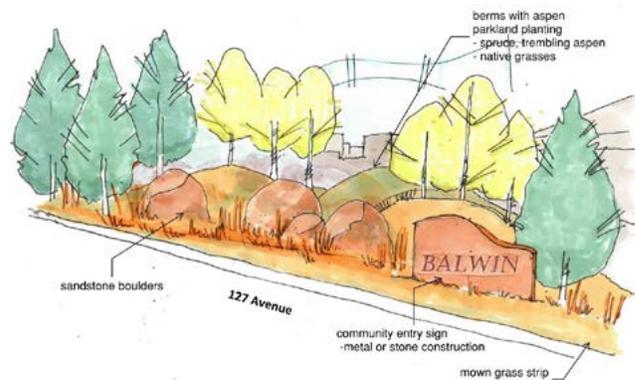
“This looks great, there’s lots of speeding around here.”



People felt Option Two would create some functional spaces for pedestrians to walk through.

“Dual entry seems more functional.”

“Option 2 has more open space and more room to play with the kids.”



There was also support due to a preference to promote each neighborhood separately.

“Having separate features will help you know which neighborhood you are in. People mix them up all the time.”

Traffic Calming Enhancements

People looked at cards, storyboards and maps, and commented on transportation revitalization improvements on 127 Avenue, 128 Avenue and 66 Street. This included:

- + Missing curb ramps
- + Missing sidewalk links
- + Curb line changes to improve operations and provide room for landscaping
- + Traffic calming and pedestrian crossing features, including speed humps on 71 Street
- + Changes to on-street parking

At the in-person event, increasing safety for pedestrians was the primary reason people supported the proposed roadway enhancements. There were some concerns that curb extensions could narrow streets, especially in the winter, which would increase congestion, but there was also a recognition that the area needed enhanced traffic safety measures.

People liked the raised crosswalks, and curb bulb outs that shortened the crossing distance for pedestrians.

“This all looks great! We need our streets to feel smaller and safer.”

Speeding and shortcutting were common concerns and people felt that the traffic calming measures would slow down dangerous drivers.



“These improvements will really help--there's lots of speeding around here.”

While a few people thought that curb bulb outs, mini barriers and raised crosswalks would add to the congestion, particularly in winter, others felt strongly that pedestrians were currently at risk, and welcomed the changes.

“If you do this, I can't get my car through or park my RV! And what about snow clearing? Last year, the snow clearing just piled snow on the streets and you couldn't even get by oncoming cars. Traffic will just crawl on my way to work.”



“I can't wait for these changes. Drivers go so fast they don't even notice pedestrians.”

People also suggest that ongoing Yellowhead Trail construction creates congestion and want that construction to be over before these measures are put into place.

There was a strong preference for more beautification of traffic calming measures and adding additional landscaping to encourage people to slow down and enjoy the pleasant sites the neighbourhood could offer.



Mini-barrier

“I’ve seen coloured curbs and mini-barriers. That is what I’d like to have here.”

“These things are unnecessarily ugly. Let’s add colour, plantings, flowers to spruce everything up a notch.”

“Colored curbs will be more noticeable and will bring more life to the street.”



Curb bulb out

Next Steps

The project team will include the thoughts and perspectives of stakeholders and the public into options for the next phase of the project. Engagement during concept design development is now complete.

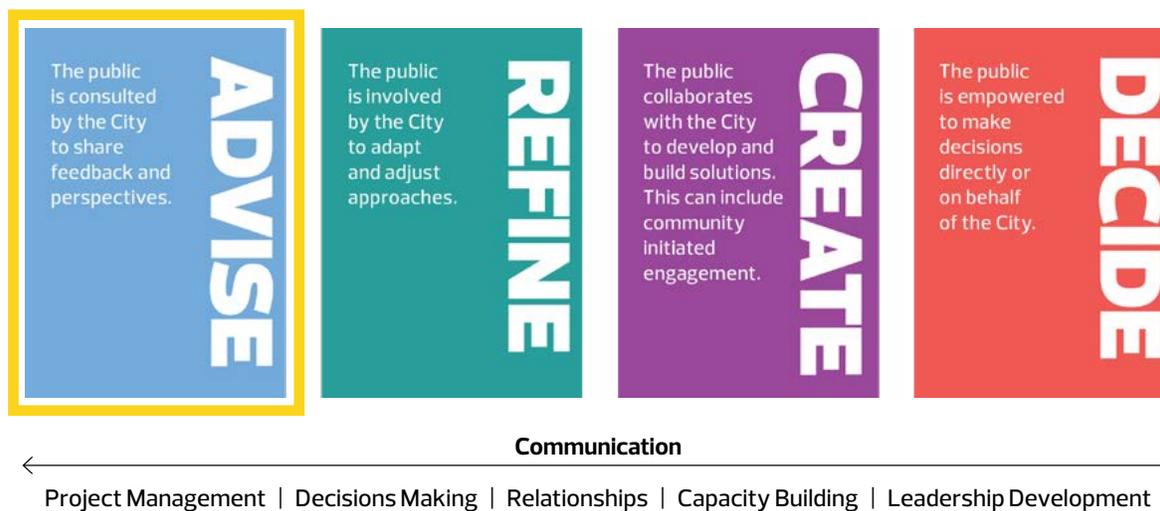
The Concept Plan design was completed in July 2023 followed by Preliminary Design by December 2023. Detailed design will follow, with construction for this project currently anticipated to begin in the 2025 construction season.

For more information, visit:

edmonton.ca/BalwinBelvedereTransportation

City of Edmonton Public Engagement Process

The City's public engagement spectrum shows four distinct levels of influence that the public can have on decisions made by the City throughout the project. The project team aims to involve community residents, stakeholders, business owners, community agencies, and visitors in decision-making to shape neighbourhood improvements.



Advise

The public and stakeholders were invited to participate at the 'Advise' level on the spectrum. In addition to ongoing public engagement, the City considers gender and other diversity characteristics in all programs and policies that affect citizens. This GBA+ (gender-based analysis) perspective can include everything from how the City conducts consultations, to neighbourhood design, to the way it delivers services.

How Decisions Are Made

The City makes decisions using a combination of policy and program information, public engagement input, technical requirements and available funding. This process helps to ensure that the City's decisions are fiscally responsible, align with best practices, consider existing public and private infrastructure, land uses and neighbourhood activities, and result in the best outcomes for our city.

City policies and programs such as the Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards, Vision Zero Edmonton, and Winter City Strategy provide the overall direction for urban planning designs. Each area is unique. That is why the project team asks for input from those who live, work and visit the neighbourhood. The City also considers technical aspects such as existing roadway widths and conflicts with utilities and trees to determine what will fit in the neighbourhood.

Decision-makers commit to incorporating stakeholder and public input into the Concept Plan and demonstrate how their input was used. In instances where the project team was unable to incorporate the input, decision-makers will communicate the constraints that led to the decision.

