

## **Yellowhead Trail: St. Albert Trail to 97 Street Dovercourt Community Conversation What We Heard Summary**

An in-person community conversation event was held for Dovercourt residents to receive an update on the 156 Street to St. Albert Trail and the St. Albert Trail to 97 Street sections of Yellowhead Trail and to discuss neighbourhood traffic and accesses, active transportation connections and options for landscaping and open space features.

The event was held at the Dovercourt Community Centre (13510 Dovercourt Ave. NW, Edmonton) on Tuesday, May 31, 2022. It was scheduled from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. and ended at 9 p.m. The event included a presentation, followed by group discussions. Approximately 35 residents attended.

A recorded version of the presentation shared at the event is included on the project website [edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street](https://edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street).

A survey was available from May 31 to June 15, 2022, for residents to provide feedback about the same topics discussed at the community conversation event. The survey was available online and paper copies were also available at a drop box located near the Dovercourt Community Centre. Twenty-six survey responses were received.

The following pages provide a summary of what we heard from Dovercourt residents at the in-person community conversation event and the online survey, and what's next for the project.

## In-person Community Conversation Event Discussion Summary

At the in-person community conversation event, the City team provided an update on the 156 Street to St. Albert Trail project and presented one concept option for the on-street bike facility and shared-use path for the Dovercourt neighbourhood. The option presented is highlighted below along with a summary of residents' questions and feedback.

### What We Shared

#### On-street bike facility and shared-use path



### What We Heard

#### Traffic Operations

Information about the future road network and traffic operations for the 156 Street to St. Albert Trail and St. Albert Trail to 97 Street projects was shared with residents.

Q. Will there be three lanes on Yellowhead Trail and two lanes on the service road?

A. Yellowhead Trail will have three lanes in each direction. The number of lanes on the service road varies along Yellowhead Trail. The service road to the north of Dovercourt between 156 Street and St. Albert Trail will include two eastbound lanes.

Q. What is meant by the term signals?

A. The term signal refers to a traffic signal or traffic light with red, yellow and green lights to manage traffic flow through an intersection.

Q. Will construction on 142 Street be complete before 149 Street is closed? Will 142 Street be open once 149 Street closes?

A. 149 Street is currently closed to traffic north of Yellowhead Trail and is planned to be reopened in mid-April. 142 Street from Yellowhead Trail to 124 Avenue will remain closed to allow for deep drainage construction into late 2022 (end of the construction season) when access will be restored to and from Yellowhead Trail eastbound only.

Q. Can we get on Yellowhead Trail immediately after we turn right from 142 Street or do we have to go through the St. Albert Trail interchange?

A. Once the project is complete, 142 Street will allow a “right in/right-out” movement to a new service road parallel to Yellowhead Trail from where users can access Yellowhead Trail eastbound without going through the St. Albert Trail interchange.



Q. How will the traffic signal for the St. Albert Trail and Dovercourt Avenue intersection be set?

A. Currently the traffic signal on St. Albert Trail and Dovercourt Avenue is a push button activated traffic signal that only changes to stop traffic on St. Albert Trail when a person presses the button to cross St. Albert Trail. If this traffic signal was changed to a full traffic signal, with lights for all four directions, the signal timing would be set based on traffic volumes and the time it takes people to cross from one side of St. Albert Trail to the other.

Q. Where do people get onto the service roads? And can you go in both directions?

A. Service roads are one-way, with the service road on the south side for eastbound traffic and the service road on the north side for westbound traffic. Drivers can access:

- both service roads from St. Albert Trail and 156 Street;
- the eastbound service road from the south of Yellowhead Trail at 142 Street and 149 Street; and
- the westbound service road from the north of Yellowhead Trail at 149 Street.

Q. Is there going to be a barrier between the service roads and the community?

A. Yes there will be a noise wall and landscaping between Dovercourt and the Yellowhead Trail corridor, including the planned service road.

Q. Are you going to change the timing of the lights for the St. Albert Trail interchange?

A. The traffic signals at the St. Albert Trail interchange will be reviewed as part of the design, to accommodate changes to how traffic accesses St. Albert Trail and the service roads.

Additional Feedback:

- There is a desire to change the yield signs to stop signs on 124 Avenue as it is a busy road and it is not clear how to proceed through the intersection (e.g. at 135 Street).
- People from the surrounding communities attend the schools within Dovercourt, which results in a lot of external traffic. All three schools serve students from other parts of the city which increases traffic volumes in the neighbourhoods.
- It was suggested that 118 Avenue should be repaved from the traffic circle to 142 Street.

- It was noted that there are concerns and misunderstandings regarding the speed limit of the service road and the merging process onto Yellowhead Trail. And it was noted that currently there is no exit from Yellowhead Trail eastbound onto the service road at 142 Street.

### **Shortcutting**

The project team noted that they have received concerns from residents regarding shortcutting through their neighbourhood.

Q. Has construction increased the shortcutting through the neighbourhood?

- The City has heard from residents that there has been an increase in traffic through Dovercourt as a result of the construction on Yellowhead Trail and the closure of 142 Street at Yellowhead Trail.
- Concerns were raised that vehicles accessing the industrial area west of 142 Street from westbound Yellowhead Trail will choose to exit the freeway at St. Albert Trail and shortcut through Dovercourt, rather than going all the way to 156 Street and turning onto the eastbound service road.
- It was noted that commercial trucks are cutting through Dovercourt and that the plan for the Yellowhead Trail freeway conversation will make trucks drive multiple blocks to get back onto 149 Street.

Additional Feedback:

- There are concerns about congestion and shortcutting due to the operation of the 118 Avenue traffic circle.
- Residents noted that they have voiced concerns in the past regarding the perceived impacts of the freeway conversion on their neighbourhood, specifically related to shortcutting and neighbourhood access.
- It was suggested that cameras (used to monitor drivers licence plates who enter and exit the area) be installed to monitor shortcutting, and if the same licence plate is noted within three minutes the driver would be sent a letter.

## **Vision Zero/Street Labs**

The project team presented information about the Vision Zero Street Labs Program. The program works collaboratively with the community to identify and implement temporary, customized, creative and flexible solutions that address traffic safety concerns outside of Neighbourhood Renewal, and major projects such as the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program. Residents were invited to participate in the program through the assigned City Community Activator.

Q. Does the City's Vision Zero Street Labs have a team that helps residents pick the right methods?

A. Yes, the City has a team of Traffic Safety Specialists and Community Activators who work with residents on identifying, selecting and implementing their custom Vision Zero Street Lab solutions.

Q. What have other communities implemented as part of the Street Labs program and what were the results?

A. The City's Vision Zero Street Labs has worked with many communities on the implementation of traffic safety measures.

An interactive map of all communities and locations, as well as more information on the Street Labs Program can be found at [www.edmonton.ca/StreetLabs](http://www.edmonton.ca/StreetLabs)

Additional Feedback:

- The Vision Zero Street Labs program was generally well received by participants. Some participants were interested in being part of the program to provide community specific inputs/ideas from Dovercourt residents. Other participants did not like the program because it requires community participation.
- It was noted that there are other problems that need to be addressed in the neighbourhood, including homelessness.

## **Traffic Counts**

The project team presented information about the traffic assessment completed in January, 2022. The results revealed that major accesses into the community showed minimal growth and that the temporary closure of 142 Street during the construction of 156 Street to St. Albert Trail project was not significantly affecting the Dovercourt

neighbourhood. However, there were changes in traffic patterns, and how drivers appeared to be entering and exiting the neighbourhood.

Q. Did you do traffic counts on 124 Avenue in the community? Are you including 124 Avenue in the upcoming traffic count?

A. Traffic counts were conducted at the following locations:

- St. Albert Trail and Dovercourt Avenue
- St. Albert Trail and 122 Avenue
- 118 Avenue and 135 Street
- 118 Avenue and 139 Street
- St. Albert Trail and the alley
- 142 Street and 124 Avenue
- St. Albert Trail and 124 Avenue

124 Avenue traffic counts were taken at St. Albert Trail and 142 Street to capture traffic entering and exiting Dovercourt; traffic counts were not taken along 124 Avenue, between these two points.

Q. Are traffic counts conducted on one day or during multiple days? A more fulsome set of data is desired as the existing data doesn't feel like it reflects what is currently being experienced.

A. The City typically conducts single-day traffic counts to generate base traffic data. This base data is usually factored for day of the week, and time of the year variation before intersection traffic volumes are produced. This factoring is based on the City's traffic information data sets and is considered accurate and acceptable for transportation planning and traffic operations purposes.

Additional Feedback:

- Residents noted that the most recent traffic counts provided don't seem accurate therefore there is the belief that traffic volumes taken during COVID are not accurate or representative of what the community is experiencing.
- There were concerns and disapproval noted about the locations used to conduct the traffic counts and the duration of the count.

## Previous Engagement

The project team shared information about previous communication with Dovercourt residents conducted as part of the public engagement for the 156 Street to St. Albert Trail project.

Q. How was it determined that Dovercourt residents didn't want traffic signals?

A. The last time the traffic signals were reviewed, the City heard from residents that there was concern that the addition of full traffic signals on St. Albert Trail may increase shortcutting through Dovercourt and that it was the communities desire, at that time, to keep the push button activated traffic signals on St. Albert Trail in place.

Additional Feedback:

- Residents expressed frustration towards the City for waiting to engage with residents at the start of the St. Albert Trail to 97 Street Project, instead of engaging at the beginning of the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion. Residents also voiced concerns that there appeared to have been no perceived action towards the safety concerns brought up in previous public engagement and that the City was now asking the community to lead the City Labs program to address traffic issues.
- Residents asked the City to provide an action plan for what's next, who will be reporting back to the community on a regular basis about how improvements for neighbourhood traffic safety will be addressed and when.

## Dovercourt Noise Wall

Information about the noise wall design for the 156 Street to St. Albert Trail project was shared with residents to show them what the noise wall for their neighbourhood will look like.

Q. How high is the noise wall?

A. The noise wall will be built to the same height (to the same elevation at the top of the wall) as the one that exists currently.

Q. How big are the noise wall panels and what is their lifetime?

A. The wall panels vary based on location. The typical panel size is approximately 4.5 m long by 2.4 m high. The life expectancy on the walls is a minimum of 50 years.

Q. Will the noise wall be painted or left as natural concrete?

A. The concrete wall will be finished with a clear matte, anti-graffiti coating that will not change the look of the natural concrete finish. No paint will be applied to the wall.

Additional Feedback:

- There was a mixed reception about the selected noise wall pattern.
- Some concerns regarding graffiti and removal of graffiti were noted.

### **Shared-use Path**

The project team presented the combined illuminated shared use path and on-street facility design proposed for Dovercourt.

Q. What is the width of the shared-use path?

A. The standard width of a shared-use path is 3 m.

Q. Where is the shared-use path and where does it go/what does it connect to?

A. The shared-use path will be located between 135 Street and St. Albert Trail on the north side of the neighbourhood, adjacent to Yellowhead Trail.

It will replace the existing sidewalk between 135 Street and 134 Street. To the west of 135 Street the active transportation connections will be a combination of the existing sidewalk and an on-street bike facility. The shared-use path will provide a connection to the entire active mode network proposed for Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion, which accommodates active mode travel west to 107 Street where it connects with the existing on-street network.

Additional Feedback:

- Concerns were raised regarding conflicts between dog walkers and shared-use path users.
- It was noted that the community would like wayfinding signs along the shared-use path. Currently cyclists travelling on the south side of the wall (124B Avenue) will continue north/west until they encounter the existing noise wall, before travelling south to cross 142 Street.

## **Open Space**

The project team presented the open space design proposed for Dovercourt.

- Concerns were raised regarding the existing wildlife living on the berm/natural areas. There is a concern about the safety of residents when there are coyotes/wildlife in the open space area. It was noted that additional garbage in the area could also attract wildlife.
- It was noted that more native plants would be nice. It was suggested that Alberta roses could be added to the area.
- There were concerns raised regarding people experiencing homelessness using the open space area for encampments.
- It was noted that pocket parks and off-leash dog areas would be nice, with the large dog population in the neighbourhood.

## Summary of Table Discussions

Q. Will the overflow pond be fenced for an off-leash dog park?

A. The surge pond (dry pond) is an EPCOR stormwater management facility to help control flooding during rainstorms and snowmelt. Water levels, water quality and ice thickness can change suddenly without notice. For safety, recreation is not allowed and caution signs will be posted around the dry pond. It will not be surrounded by a fence and this area is not designated as a City of Edmonton off-leash park.

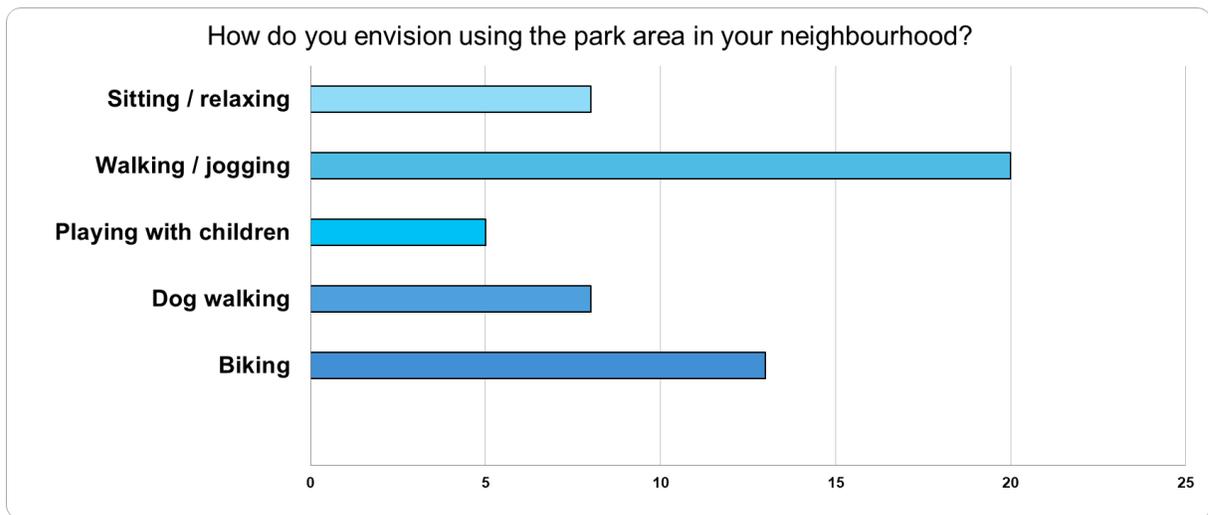
Additional Feedback:

- It was noted that there is a water valve located along the berm and there is an issue with water freezing and thawing in the area. It was suggested that the shared-use path not be placed over the water shut off valve.
- It was noted that there is Canada thistle existing along the berm that poses a threat to the native or planned plants in the area.
- Consider improvements, such as benches, accessible gathering space, to accommodate seniors mobility needs on the east corner at the top of 134 Street.
- Add beds of indigenous plants south of the wall.
- Make a sidewalk on the west edge of the community a shared-use path.
- Ensure the shared-use path is extended to the bus stop.

## Survey Feedback Summary

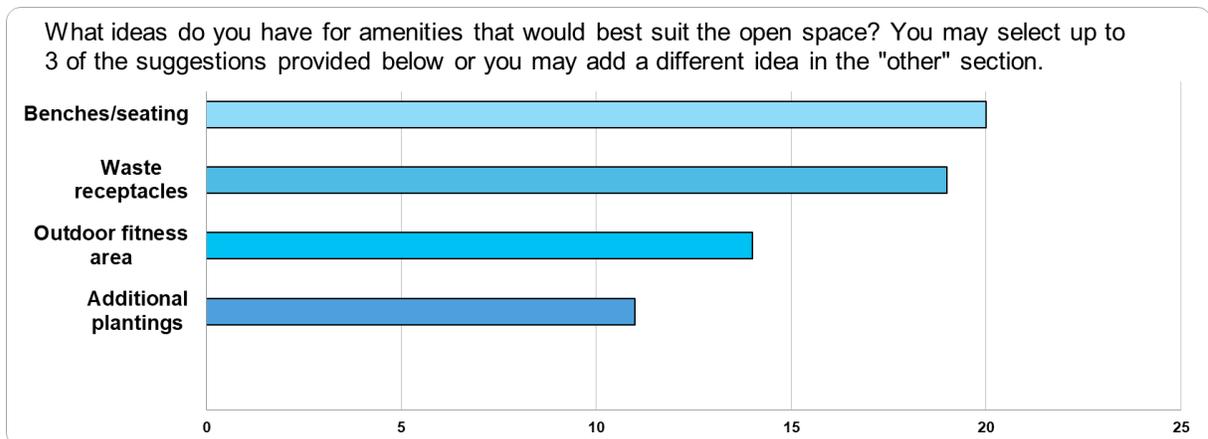
*Question: How do you envision using the open space in your neighbourhood?*

Residents mentioned using the space for walking, biking and off-leash dog walking activity most. Outdoor play was also mentioned.



*Question: What ideas do you have for amenities that would best fit the open space?*

Amenities residents mentioned most were benches/seating, additional waste receptacles and fitness equipment. Additional amenities mentioned were fruit-bearing trees and shrubs.



*Question: Do you have any feedback to share about the proposed on-street bike facility and shared-use path connections to 142 Street and 127 Street?*



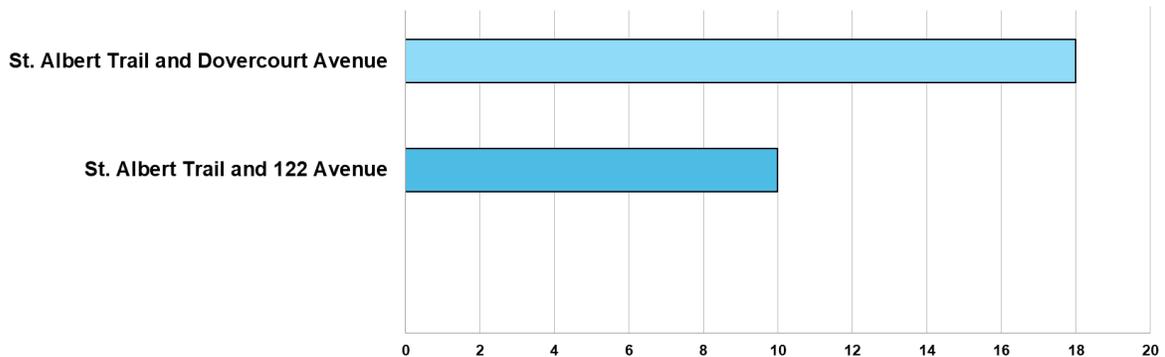
Residents mentioned that having an on-street bike lane with physical separation was ideal since without the physical separation, many cyclists would choose to use the sidewalk instead for their safety.

*Question: We would like to understand if you support installation of new traffic signals at the following locations: St. Albert Trail/Dovercourt Avenue and St. Albert Trail/122 Avenue.*

Eighteen residents supported the installation of traffic signals at St. Albert Trail and Dovercourt Avenue intersection. Ten residents supported the installation of a traffic signal at the St. Albert Trail and 122 Avenue intersection. Those who did support traffic lights mentioned that lights may help to reduce long waits to turn left from both intersections.

It was noted that many residents were not supportive of traffic signals at either location because they felt it may cause more delays, require vehicles to idle for longer and increase residential cut-through traffic.

We would like to understand if you support installation of new traffic signals at the following locations:



*Question: Do you have any concerns to share about access into and out of the Dovercourt neighbourhood at the intersections of St. Albert Trail and Dovercourt Avenue and St. Albert Trail and 122 Avenue? If yes, please explain.*

Additional feedback residents provided to the above question included:

- Suggestions for improving both intersections were provided which included improving sightlines by removing obstructions such as trees and bushes close to the intersections, and to use lights, yield or stop signs to better manage traffic.
- The 118 Avenue traffic circle was frequently mentioned by residents and many felt it does not operate adequately to the local traffic needs.
- The installation of speed bumps on 124 Avenue was suggested to help discourage cut-through traffic.

## What's Next

### Traffic Safety

Following the opening of the 142 Street access to Yellowhead Trail, the City will be conducting traffic signal assessments for the intersections along St. Albert Trail. The City will provide an update to Dovercourt residents following the assessment and feedback received from the community in 2023.

The City Vision Zero Street Labs program is available to the Dovercourt Community. The Street Labs program works collaboratively to identify and implement temporary, customised, creative and flexible solutions that address traffic safety concerns outside of Neighbourhood Renewal, and major projects such as the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program. There was interest from Dovercourt residents in pursuing the Vision Zero Street Labs program to create a team and plan based on the feedback received from neighbourhood residents. The City's Community Activator will work with the team on the plan to explore traffic calming measures that could improve traffic safety in Dovercourt.

Visit [edmonton.ca/StreetLabs](https://edmonton.ca/StreetLabs) for more information.

### Open Space and Active Modes

Feedback received from Dovercourt residents at the in-person community conversation event and the online survey will be used along with City policies and programs and technical analysis to refine the active transportation connections and landscaping and open space features for the neighbourhood. The revised plans along with the preliminary design plan for Yellowhead Trail: St. Albert Trail to 97 Street will be shared with residents in 2023.

The City will provide more detailed information about the project as it moves forward into future phases of design and construction. To stay up to date and get the latest information about this project please visit [edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street](https://edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street) and sign up for the e-newsletter.

For more information about the design, construction and traffic plans for Yellowhead Trail: 156 Street to St. Albert Trail please visit [edmonton.ca/Yellowhead156StreettoStAlbertTrail](https://edmonton.ca/Yellowhead156StreettoStAlbertTrail) and sign up for the e-newsletter.