

Urban Design Analysis

Chapter 3:

Malmö Plains Neighbourhood Renewal

November 2020



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Introduction

The Malmo Plains Neighbourhood Renewal project team has developed a draft design for a number of key spaces within the neighbourhood. The options are presented in the following report including a description of the process taken to develop the design, as well as considerations for refinement of the design in the next phase of the project.

This report summarizes the Draft Design stage of the Malmo Plains Neighbourhood Renewal project. The Draft Design stage comes after Starting the Conversation, Building a Project Vision Together, Exploring Opportunities and Exploring Options and Trade-offs stages. Previous reports include the following:

- + Malmo Plains Neighbourhood Renewal Background Report – February 2020
- + Exploring Options and Trade-offs Report – September 2020

During 2020, three events were held to gain community feedback. The three events were as follows:

- + Exploring Options and Trade-offs event held in January 2020 that presented design options, along with associated benefits and trade-offs
- + The Project Update, held in June 2020 collected survey input from residents that was used by the design team to inform the proposed design
- + Community Feedback on Final Design, held in October 2020, collected survey information to gain community input on the Final Design

Refer to the roadmap on the next page that the Neighbourhood Renewal program follows:

Introduction

Neighbourhood Renewal Roadmap



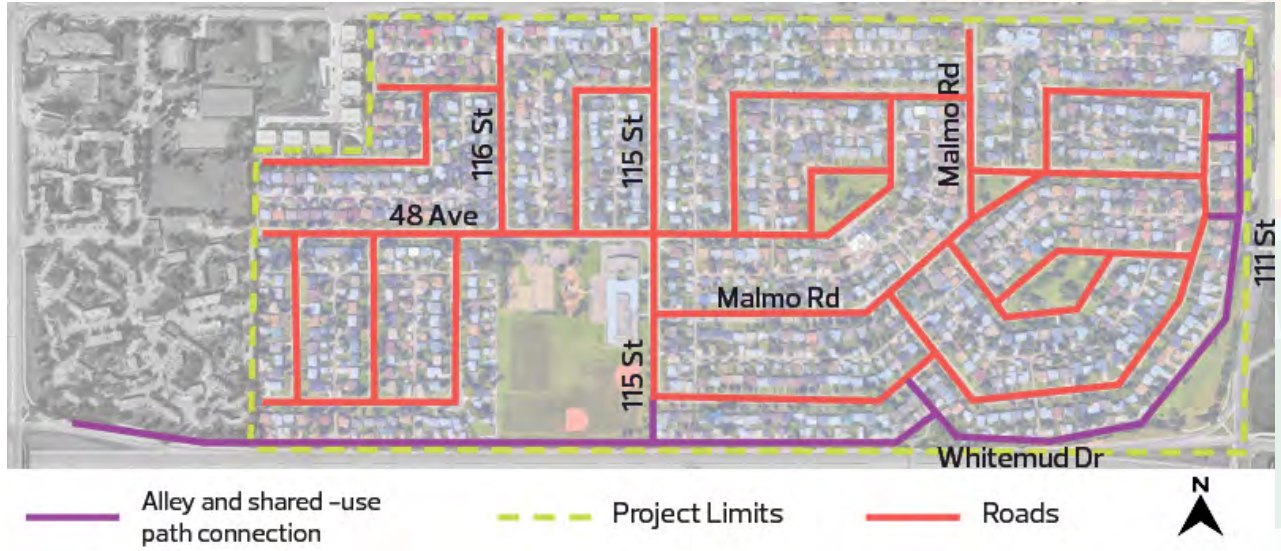
Introduction

The purpose of the Draft Design stage is to:

- + Develop a refined set of draft designs that bring the community vision to life
- + Verify the feasibility of the design options and select those that best incorporate the input provided by the community, addresses technical requirements and aligns with existing strategies, policies and guidelines
- + Identify any constraints to implementing the improvements, and develop strategies to address them
- + Gain insight from project team members/key business partners and build understanding and knowledge of the project
- + Identify the steps required to advance the Draft Design to the Preliminary Design stage, including coordination with City business partners such as operations and maintenance

Project Area

The project area for the Malmo Plains Neighbourhood Renewal is illustrated on the plan below:



Project Area

The alley that runs along Whitemud Drive and 111 Street was added to the project area based on input received by the community identifying this as a major active transportation link. The alley acts as a key link for people walking and biking to/ from the Southgate LRT station/transit centre pedway and connects to the pedestrian bridge over Whitemud Drive that leads to Confederation Park and the neighbourhoods to the south. Additionally, the existing shared-use path links to a shared-use path along 114 Street (due to the pedestrian foot bridge over Whitemud Drive) to 43 Avenue and then transitions to a shared street connecting to 34 Avenue. Residents can access Royal Gardens and Aspen Gardens from this route as well.

The arterial roadways of 122 Street, 51 Avenue and 111 Street and Whitemud Drive freeway are not included with the Malmo Plains Neighbourhood Renewal project. The Michener Park development, owned by the University of Alberta, is also excluded. Although these areas will not be included for upgrades with Neighbourhood Renewal, they were reviewed to ensure consideration of how people move through these areas and get in, out and around Malmo Plains.

Please refer to the Malmo Plains Neighbourhood Renewal Background and Exploring Options reports for additional information.



Draft Design

The Draft Design for the Malmo Plains Neighbourhood Renewal was developed through a collaborative process involving the project team, other City business partners and the community of Malmo Plains. The following list shows the steps undertaken during this phase:

- + The input received during the Exploring Options Community Engagement Event in January 2020 was compiled and reviewed. Preferences for the design options presented at this event were considered alongside the technical requirements, operational and maintenance considerations and alignment with existing strategy, policy, standards and guidelines
- + Draft recommendations for each of the potential neighbourhood improvements were prepared by the project team and were shared with City business partners and subject matter experts. Input was considered and the draft designs were refined
- + A decision-making meeting was held with the project team and key City business partners where the draft design for each improvement was reviewed and discussed. It was decided at this meeting how to advance the draft design and what elements from the Exploring Options phase should be incorporated and what elements should be revised
- + Following this meeting, the project team developed the design drawings and supplemental materials that were presented to the community at the Draft Design Engagement Event, held virtually in June 2020
- + Following additional public feedback received in October 2020, some designs were further refined



Draft Neighbourhood Improvements

The following Draft Design was developed based on community feedback and by using a holistic approach to design, where the neighbourhood is viewed as a series of interconnected networks: privately owned lands, public open space and mobility. Changes to any one of the networks may have an impact on the others and so the project team paid close attention to the trade-offs required for each improvement to ensure that the impacts are minimized.

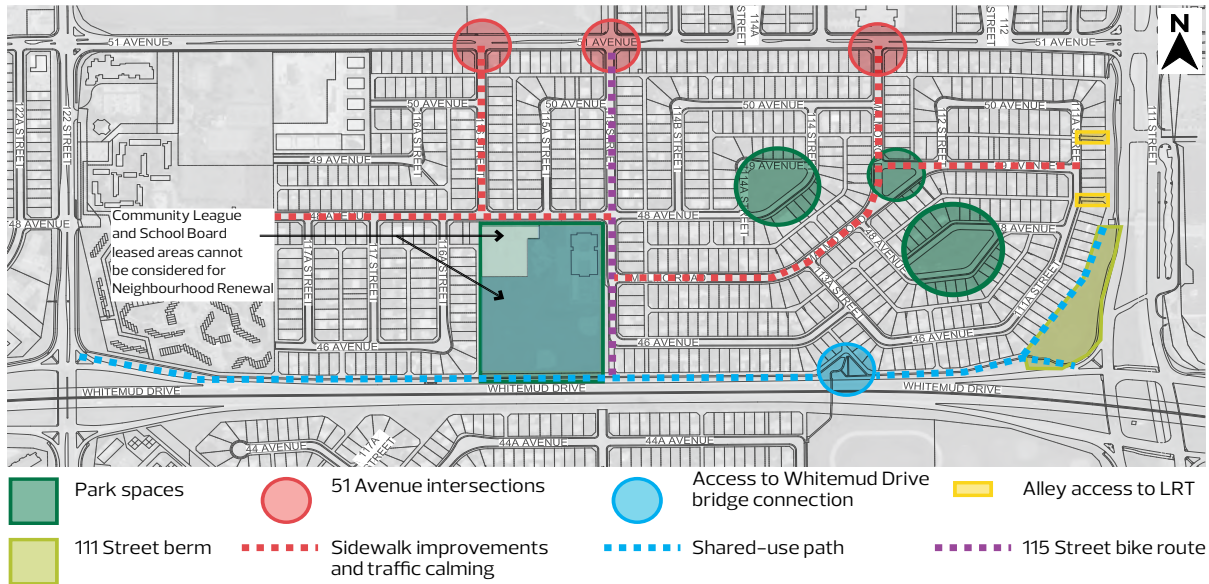
The body of this report covers the neighbourhood of Malmo Plains by area and provides information on:

- + What We Heard
- + Draft Design Presented
- + What Changed from the Exploring Options Stage
- + Considerations to Refine the Design



Draft Neighbourhood Improvements

Overall Neighbourhood Plan





Malmö Plains Park

What we heard in January and June 2020

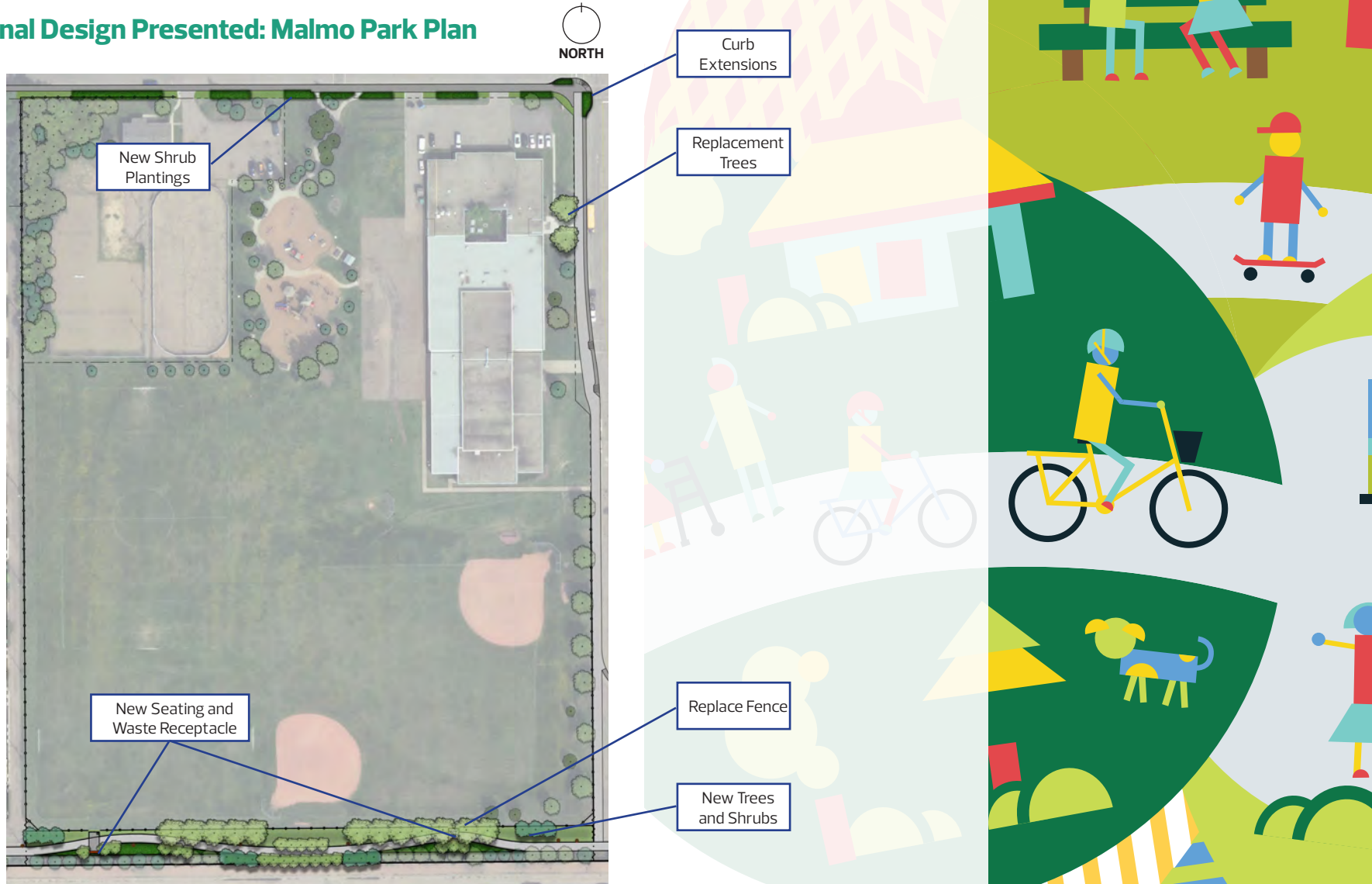
- + Participants support closing the alley south of the park but prefer to keep a fence to separate the school yard from the shared-use path
- + There were concerns around the maintenance of the proposed planting
- + There was a desire to include a shade structure within the park, near the playground. The shade structure would not be part of this project but could be part of a community-led project.





Malmo Plains Park

Final Design Presented: Malmo Park Plan





Malmo Plains Park

Draft Design Presented: Looking East at the Closed Alley on the South Side of Malmo Park





Malmo Plains Park

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + A wood fence is proposed to separate the school yard from the shared-use path. During the Exploring Options phase there was no fence proposed
- + The plantings shown in previous alley perspectives were removed, and sod with smaller shrubs and decorative grasses will be added between the fence and the shared-use path

Considerations to Refine the Design

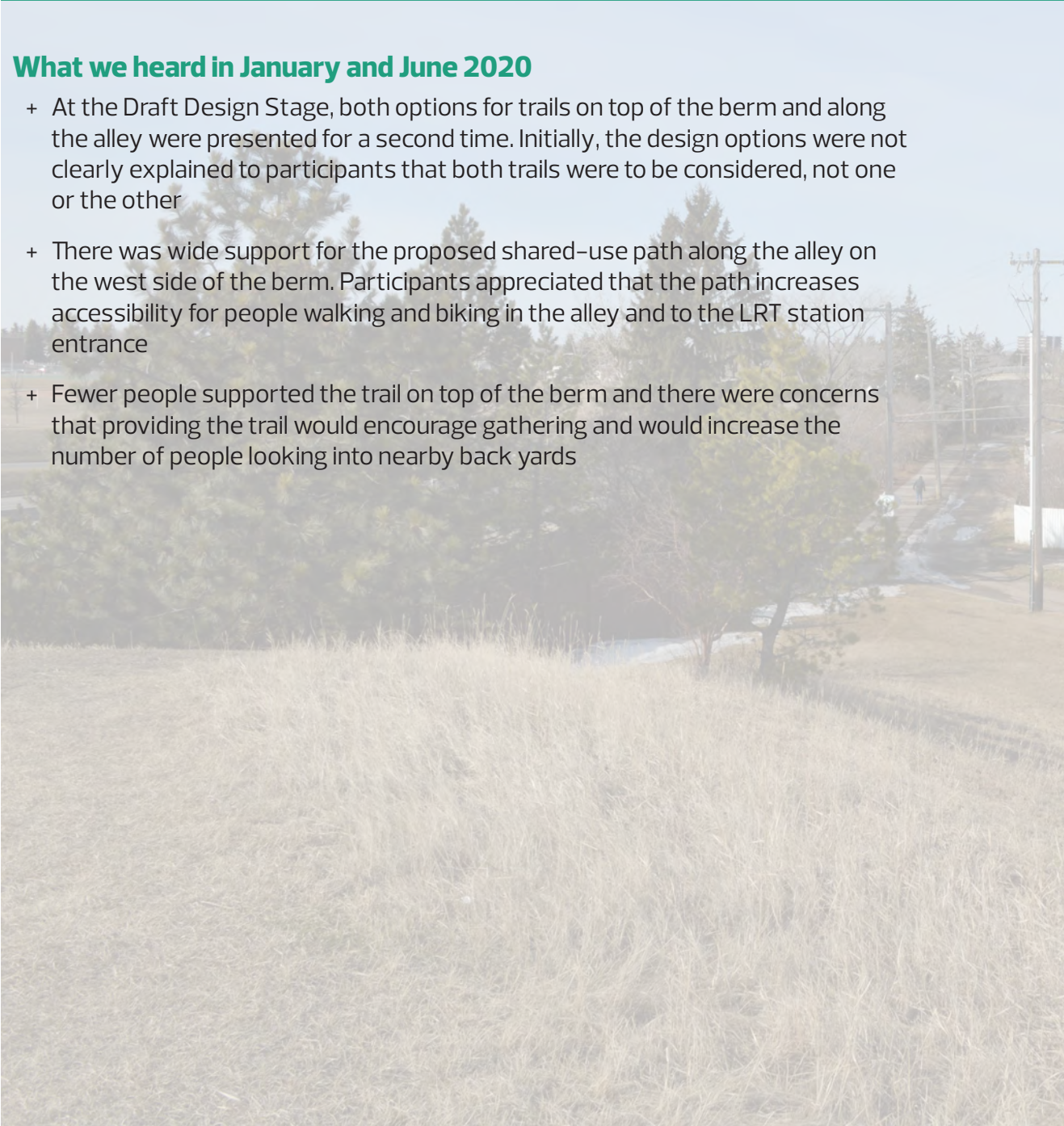
- + A formal closure of the alley will be required with access control, such as bollards, at the existing alley entrances. The project team will initiate this closure with the appropriate City business partners
- + To avoid hazards for people who bike, the alignment of the shared-use path will need to be refined to ensure that it is not placed too close to the existing power poles
- + Suggested plant species for the alley, and for the area to the north of the school will be reviewed by the appropriate City business partners to ensure that the plantings can be adequately maintained
- + A wood fence with updated access points and designed to allow for visibility to and from the park is proposed
- + Including seating on both sides of the shared-use-path will allow for different views into and out of the park, and provide for sunny and shady seating options



111 Street Berm

What we heard in January and June 2020

- + At the Draft Design Stage, both options for trails on top of the berm and along the alley were presented for a second time. Initially, the design options were not clearly explained to participants that both trails were to be considered, not one or the other
- + There was wide support for the proposed shared-use path along the alley on the west side of the berm. Participants appreciated that the path increases accessibility for people walking and biking in the alley and to the LRT station entrance
- + Fewer people supported the trail on top of the berm and there were concerns that providing the trail would encourage gathering and would increase the number of people looking into nearby back yards





111 Street Berm

Final Design Presented: 111 St Berm Plan



NORTH

New Waste Receptacle

New Shared-Use Path

New Bench and Waste Receptacle

Existing Shared-Use Path to Remain

Existing Shrub Beds





111 Street Berm

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + A trail and bench at the top of the berm have been removed from consideration as it would be more difficult to maintain long-term due to the steep slope and would not be cleared in the winter. Community members were concerned they could also encourage loitering

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + The alignment of the shared-use path along the alley will need to be refined to ensure that the path is not placed too close to the existing power poles which would create a hazard to people on bikes
- + The connection between the proposed shared-use path and the existing shared-use path along 111 Street will need to be defined as there is little space between the existing planting and the LRT station pedway entrance. Some possible options include reduced path widths and localised vegetation removal
- + For space constrained sections where the shared-use path is next to the alley, some vegetation will need to be identified for removal
- + For space constrained sections where the shared-use path is next to the alley, either a concrete header or a vertical separation will need to be considered to visually and physically differentiate between the two surfaces

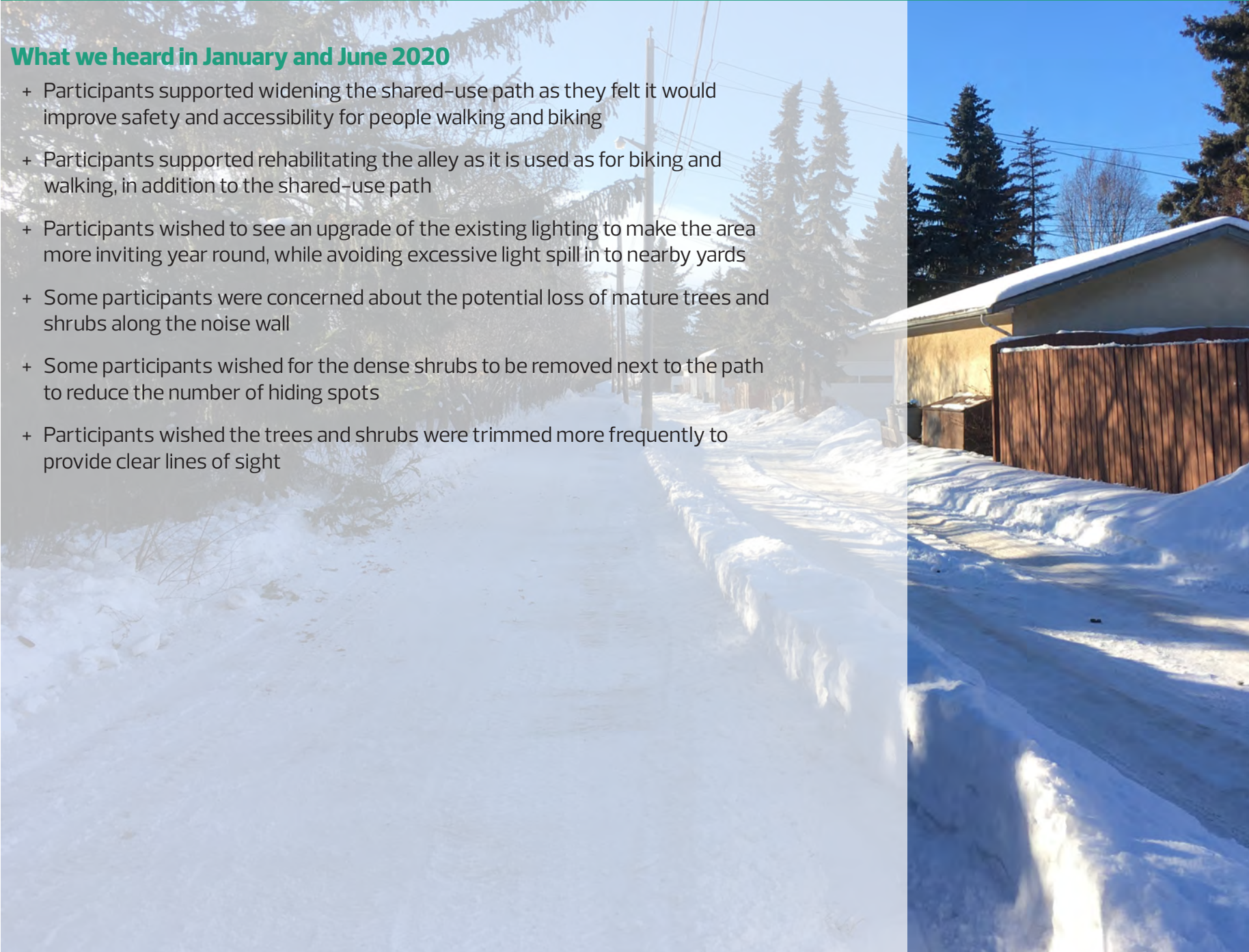




Shared-Use Path along Whitemud Drive

What we heard in January and June 2020

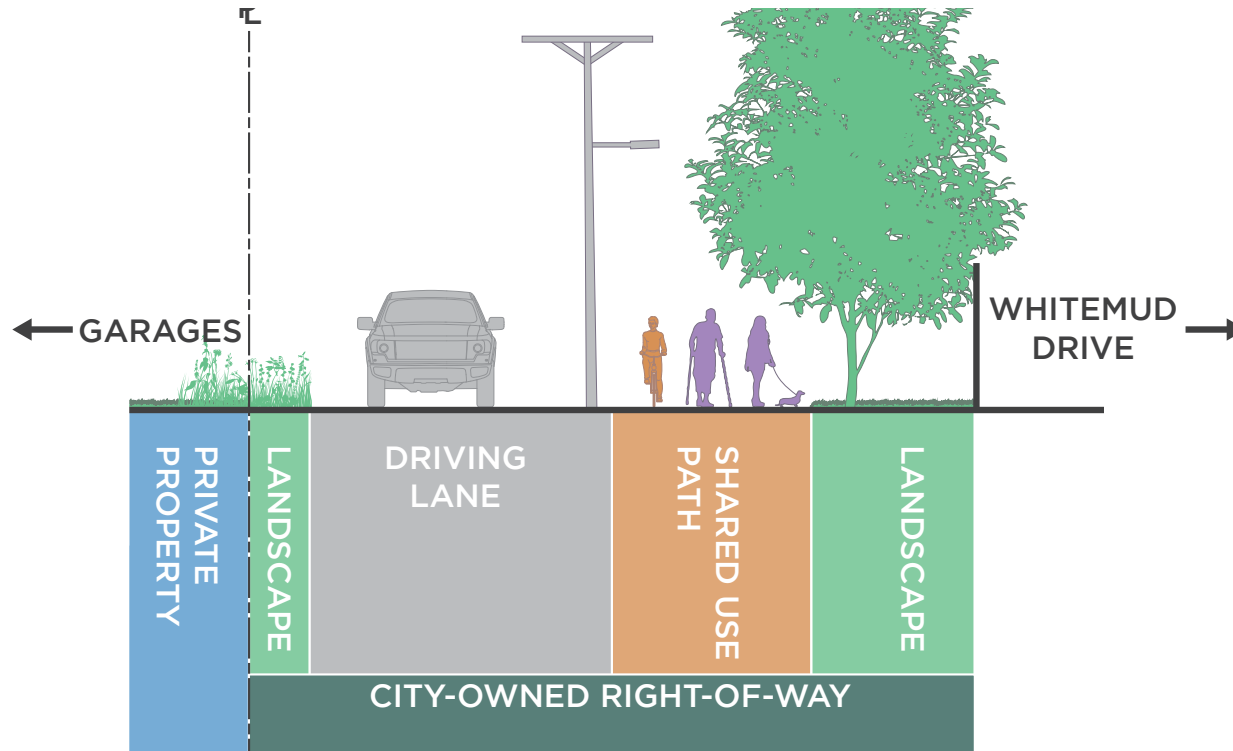
- + Participants supported widening the shared-use path as they felt it would improve safety and accessibility for people walking and biking
- + Participants supported rehabilitating the alley as it is used as for biking and walking, in addition to the shared-use path
- + Participants wished to see an upgrade of the existing lighting to make the area more inviting year round, while avoiding excessive light spill in to nearby yards
- + Some participants were concerned about the potential loss of mature trees and shrubs along the noise wall
- + Some participants wished for the dense shrubs to be removed next to the path to reduce the number of hiding spots
- + Participants wished the trees and shrubs were trimmed more frequently to provide clear lines of sight





Shared-Use Path along Whitemud Drive

Draft Design Presented: Alley Cross-Sections





Shared-Use Path along Whitemud Drive

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + The shared-use-path is proposed to remain at its existing width, rather than widening. This is due to the extensive mature tree and shrub removal that would be required to widen the path
- + The alley next to the shared-use path will be rehabilitated from the west side of Malmo Plains up to the LRT connection at 111 Street

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + The vegetation in the area will need to be assessed to determine whether some selective removal of tree branches, shrubs or underbrush are required to maintain a safe clearance from the shared-use path
- + Rehabilitation of the shared-use path will be reviewed to determine if failed sections, or the entire path, should be replaced with new concrete
- + A tactile surface or a vertical separation between the shared-use path and the alley should be considered
- + Along the shared use path, lighting upgrades and lighting placement will need to be considered

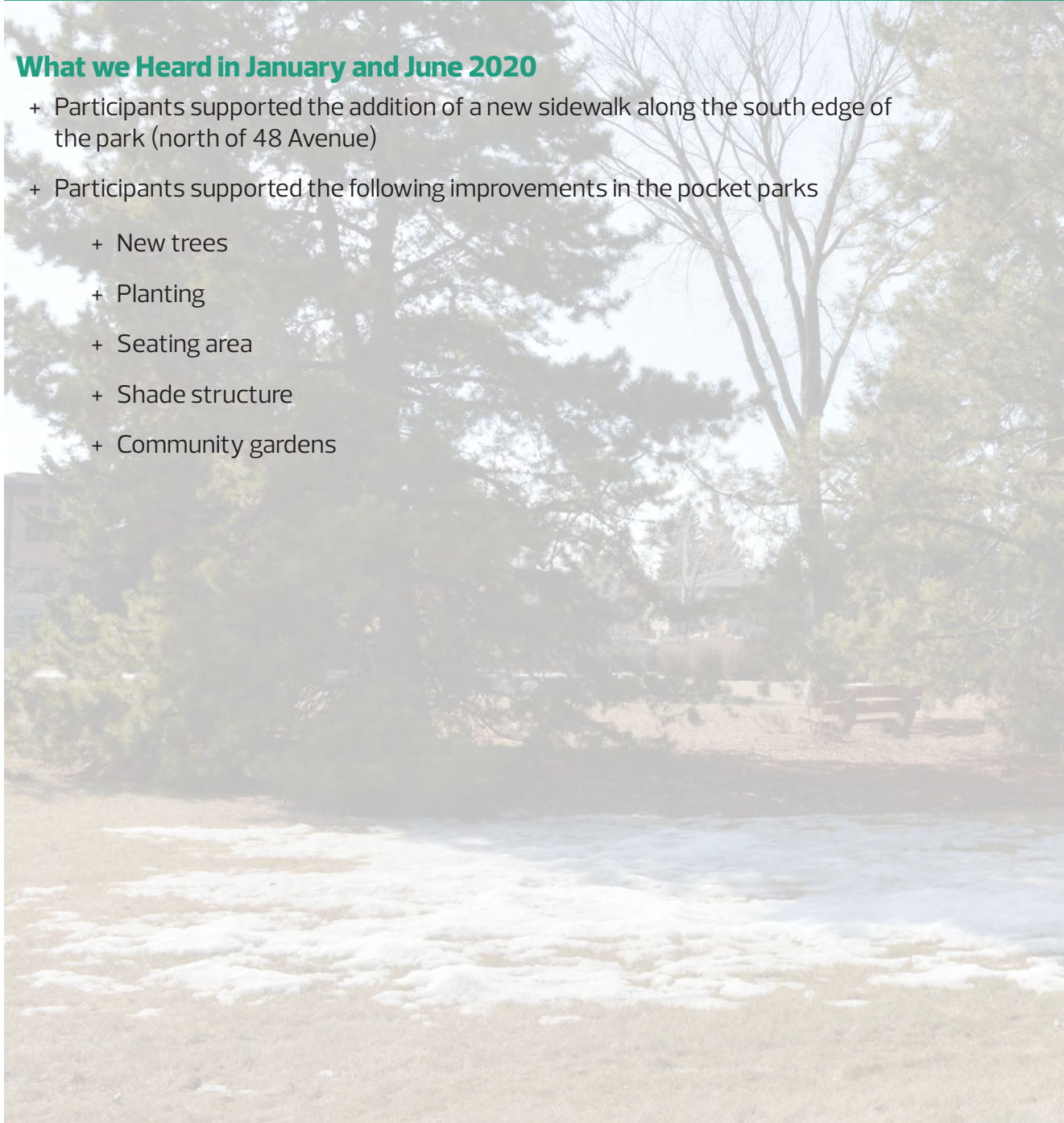




Pocket Park 'A' – 114 Street and 48 Avenue

What we Heard in January and June 2020

- + Participants supported the addition of a new sidewalk along the south edge of the park (north of 48 Avenue)
- + Participants supported the following improvements in the pocket parks
 - + New trees
 - + Planting
 - + Seating area
 - + Shade structure
 - + Community gardens





Pocket Park 'A' – 114 Street and 48 Avenue

Draft Design Presented: Pocket Park "A" Plan





Pocket Park 'A' – 114 Street and 48 Avenue

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + Specific improvements were proposed for Pocket Park 'A' that were previously presented generally for all pocket parks. These improvements are a new seating area and a waste receptacle. The seating area will be connected to the proposed sidewalk along 48 Avenue.

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + The alignment of the new trail through the park will need to be defined, and any vegetation removal, or ways to avoid existing vegetation will need to be identified
- + Specific products for the picnic table and the litter receptacle will need to be selected, and the selected products will be common to all locations in Malmo Plains
- + Seating area will be placed to take advantage of shade provided by existing or new trees

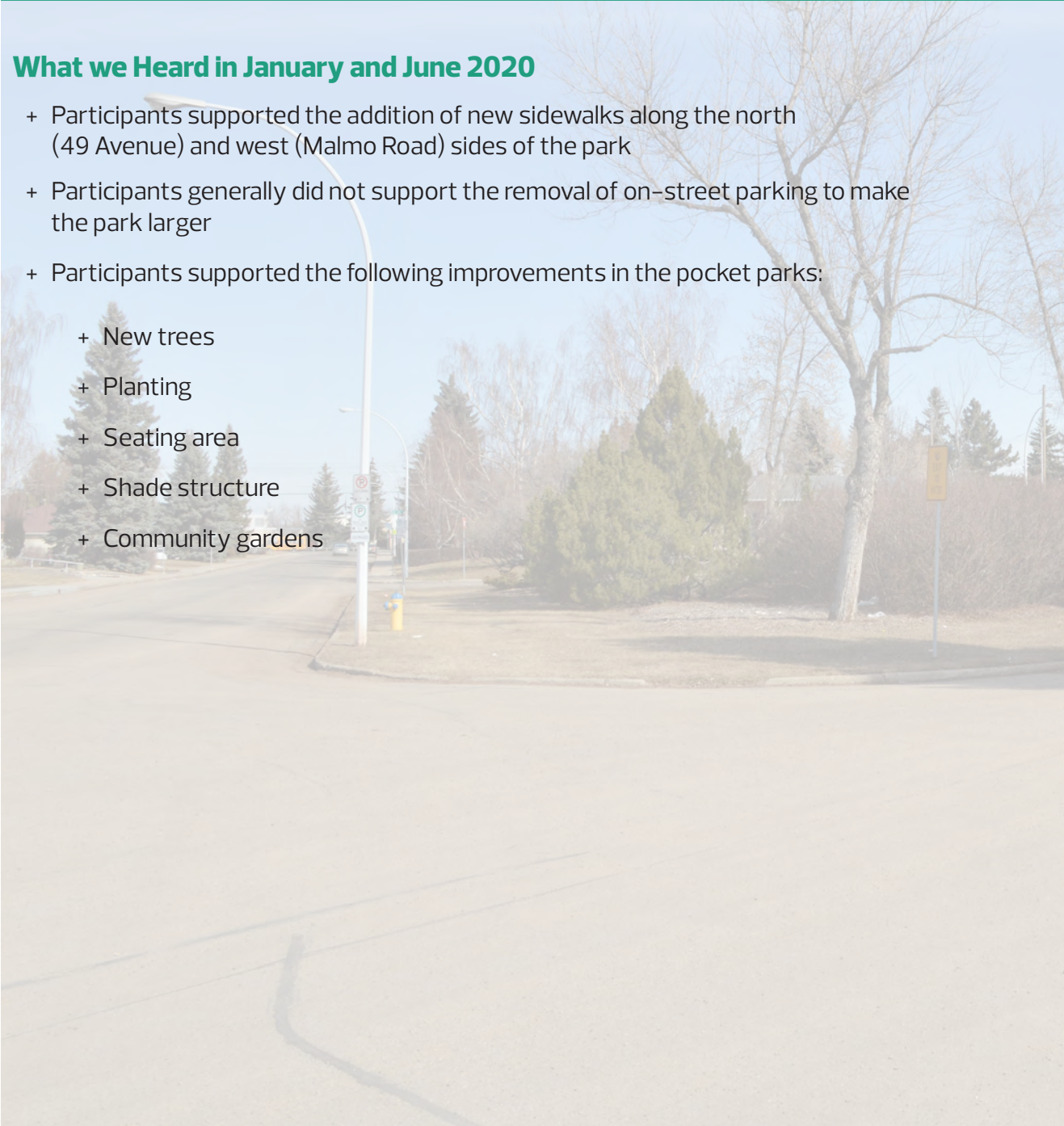




Pocket Park 'B' – Malmo Road and 49 Avenue

What we Heard in January and June 2020

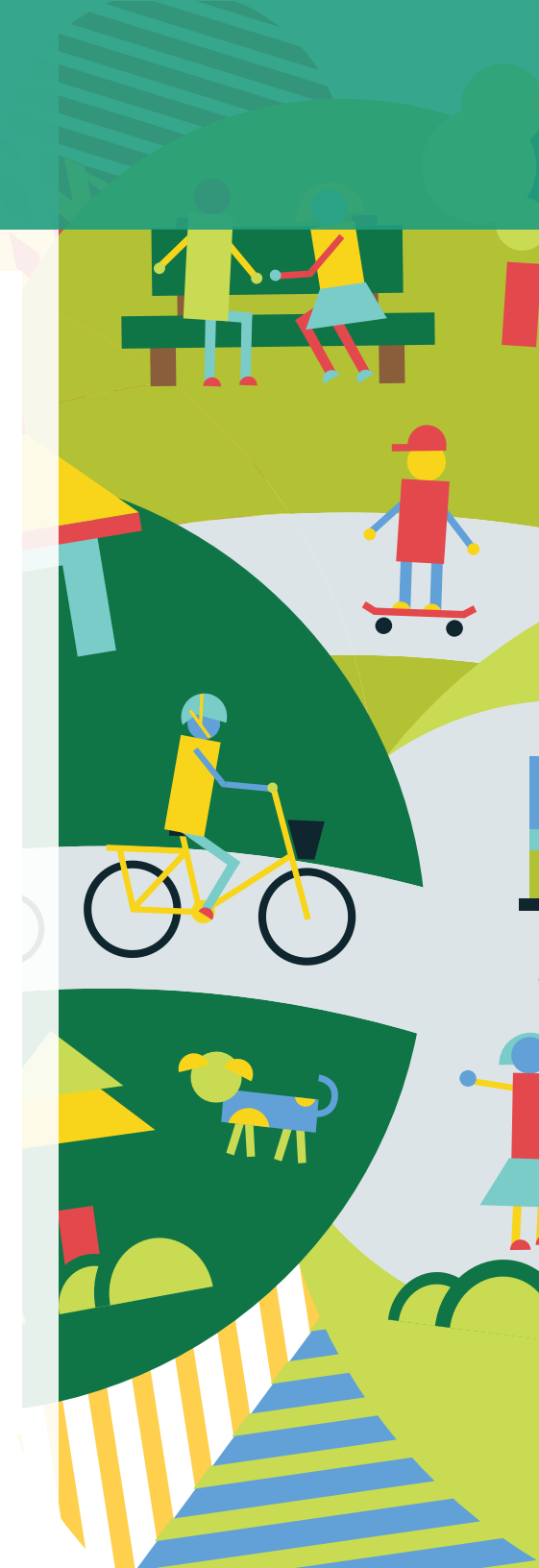
- + Participants supported the addition of new sidewalks along the north (49 Avenue) and west (Malmo Road) sides of the park
- + Participants generally did not support the removal of on-street parking to make the park larger
- + Participants supported the following improvements in the pocket parks:
 - + New trees
 - + Planting
 - + Seating area
 - + Shade structure
 - + Community gardens





Pocket Park 'B' – Malmo Road and 49 Avenue

Draft Design Presented: Pocket Park "B" Plan





Pocket Park 'B' – Malmo Road and 49 Avenue

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + The size of the park was not increased, with the exception of the creation of curb extensions at the intersection of Malmo Road and 49 Avenue. This resulted in less impact to the quantity of on-street parking
- + The curb extension along Malmo Road across from the pocket park was re-configured to better align the intersection with 49 Avenue

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + New sidewalk alignments will need to anticipate desire lines of people walking, particularly in the new curb extensions to be created at the south side of the park
- + A bench or resting area along the trail or sidewalk should be considered with the seating facing into the park and not towards private properties
- + Determine opportunity for trees and planting in the new boulevard

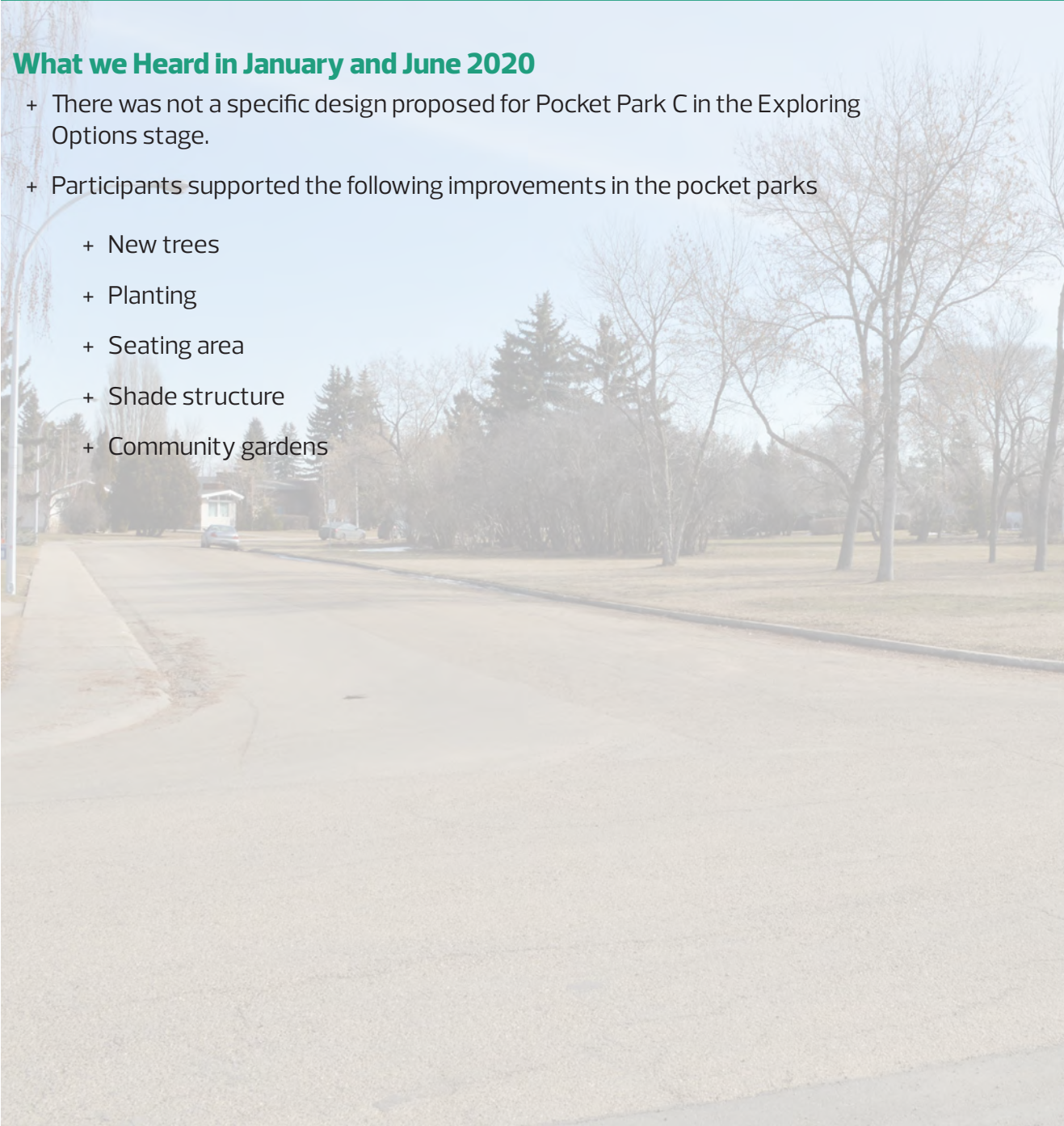




Pocket Park 'C' – 48 Avenue

What we Heard in January and June 2020

- + There was not a specific design proposed for Pocket Park C in the Exploring Options stage.
- + Participants supported the following improvements in the pocket parks
 - + New trees
 - + Planting
 - + Seating area
 - + Shade structure
 - + Community gardens





Pocket Park 'C' – 48 Avenue

Draft Design Presented: Pocket Park "C" Plan





Pocket Park 'C' – 48 Avenue

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + A draft design for Pocket Park 'C' was presented, showing new planting on the west side of the park and a picnic table on a concrete pad in the northeast corner of the park

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + Specific products for the picnic table and waste receptacle will need to be identified
- + The seating area will be placed to take advantage of the shade provided by the existing trees
- + A sidewalk connection to the roadway should be considered to allow for accessibility and facilitate waste removal





51 Avenue Intersections

What we heard in January and June 2020

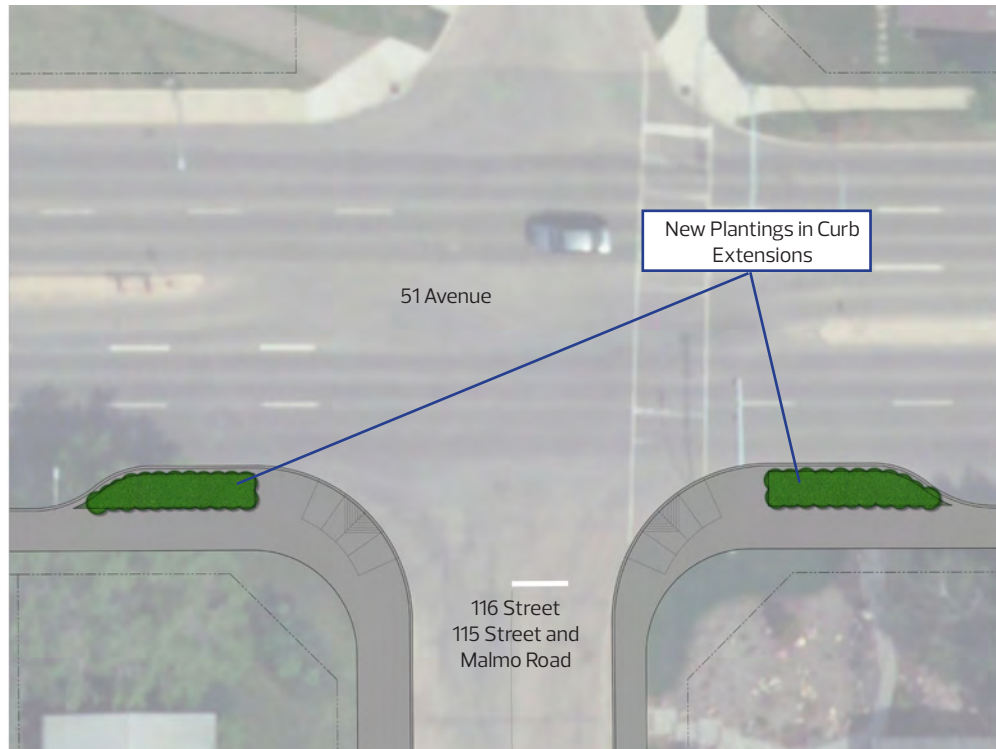
- + Participants supported the increased visibility and shorter crossing distances as shown in the crossing options for people to cross 51 Avenue
- + Participants appreciated the added green space in the curb extensions, that help to enhance the entrances to the community
- + Participants acknowledged that the curb extensions would require people driving cars to be careful when navigating the corners
- + Participants were concerned that curb extensions extending south onto the streets (115 Street, 116 Street and Malmo Road) would make it more difficult for people driving from turning right onto 51 Avenue





51 Avenue Intersections

Draft Design Presented: 115 Street / 116 Street & Malmo Road





51 Avenue Intersections

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + The curb extensions on 116 Street, 115 Street and Malmo Road at 51 Avenue were removed from the design to ensure that people driving can turn right onto 51 Avenue without having to wait for other drivers to make through or left-turn movements. The curb extensions on 51 Avenue have been retained in the design

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + Any proposed upgrades to the signals at each intersection will need to be confirmed by the appropriate City business partners
- + On the east side of the Malmo Road intersection, refinements to the proposed curb extensions will need to be evaluated to ensure they remain compatible with bus movements.





Sidewalk Improvements

What we heard in January and June 2020

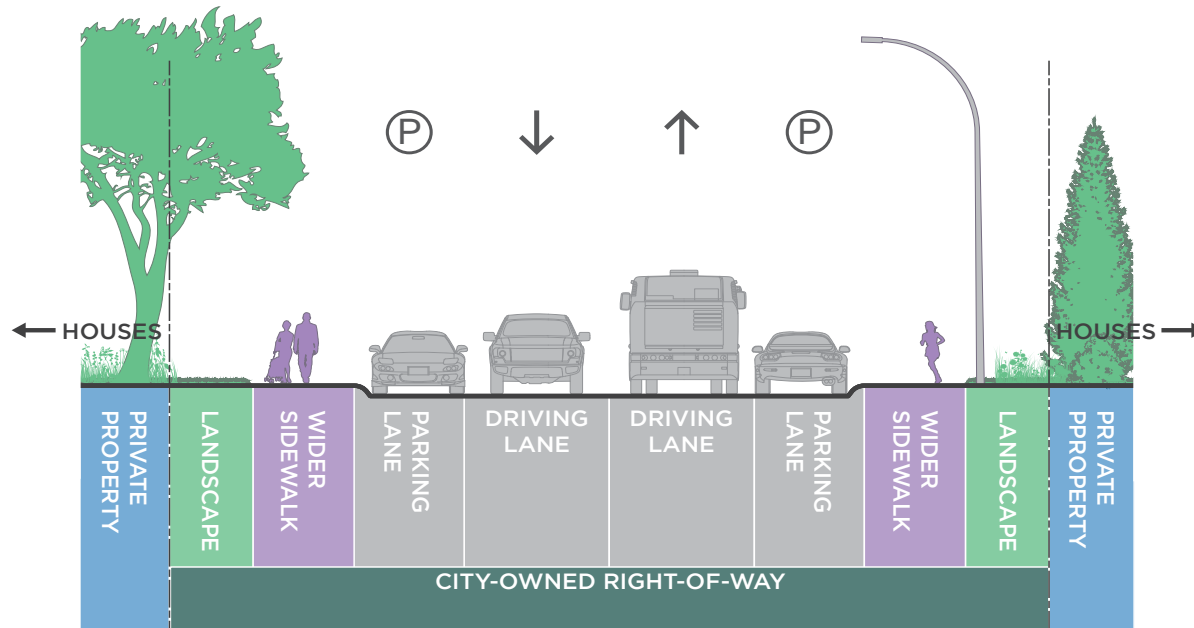
- + The majority of participants supported the wider curbside walk along key walking routes
- + Many participants did not support the creation of separated sidewalks with treed boulevards due to the potential loss of front yard space





Sidewalk Improvements

Draft Design Presented: Cross Section





Sidewalk Improvements

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + No changes were made to the preferred option of a widened sidewalk next to the road

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + Impacts to existing private landscaping at the back of the sidewalk but within the road right-of-way will be identified and communicated to the homeowners

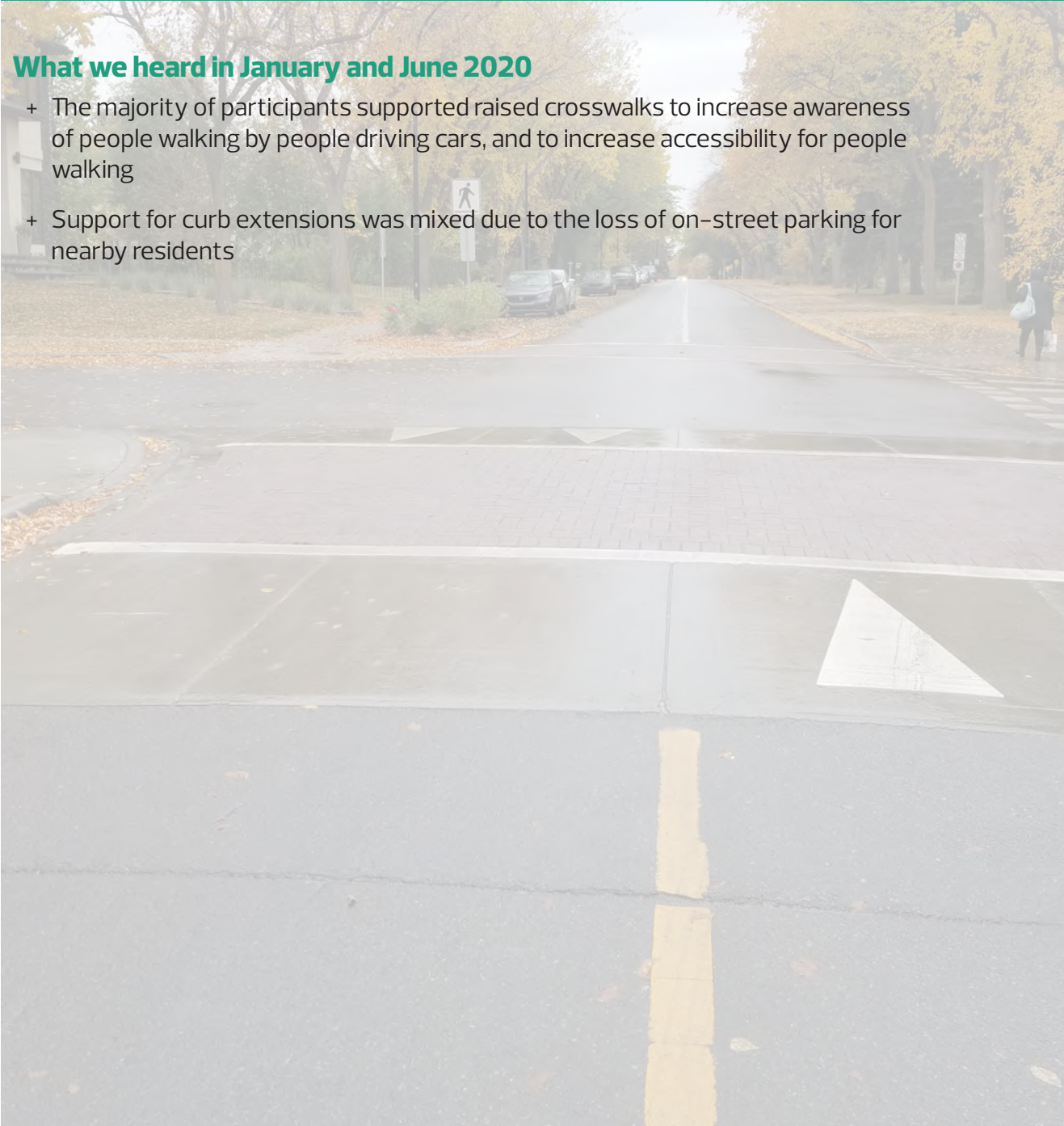




Traffic Calming

What we heard in January and June 2020

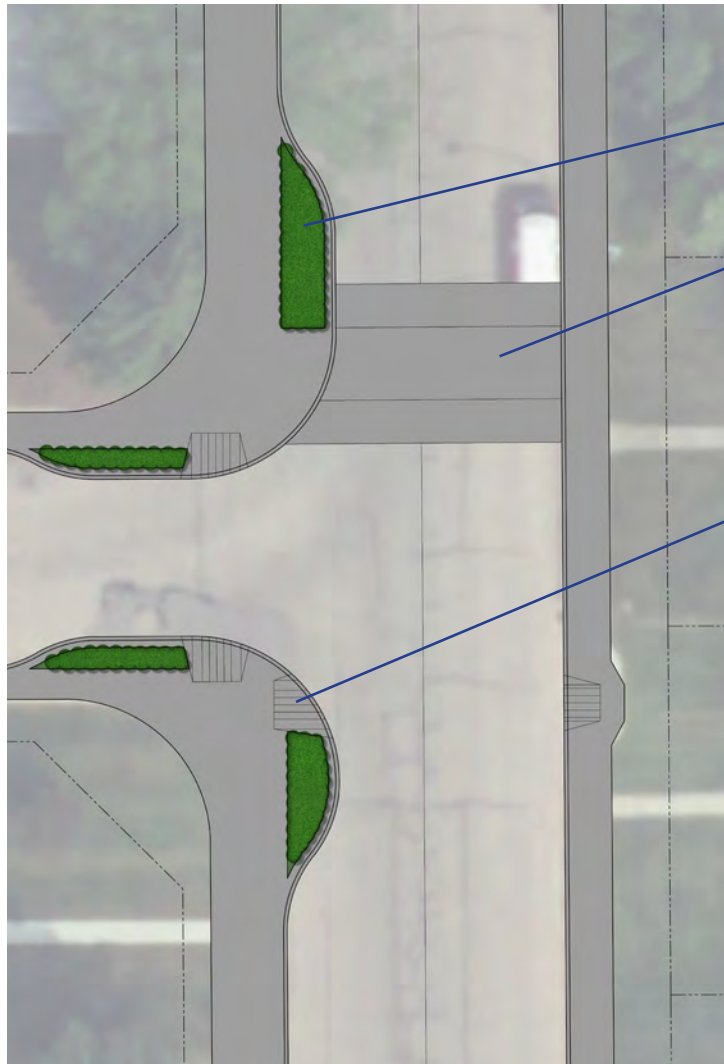
- + The majority of participants supported raised crosswalks to increase awareness of people walking by people driving cars, and to increase accessibility for people walking
- + Support for curb extensions was mixed due to the loss of on-street parking for nearby residents





Traffic Calming

Draft Design Presented: Typical Curb Extensions



New Plantings in Curb Extensions

Raised Crosswalk

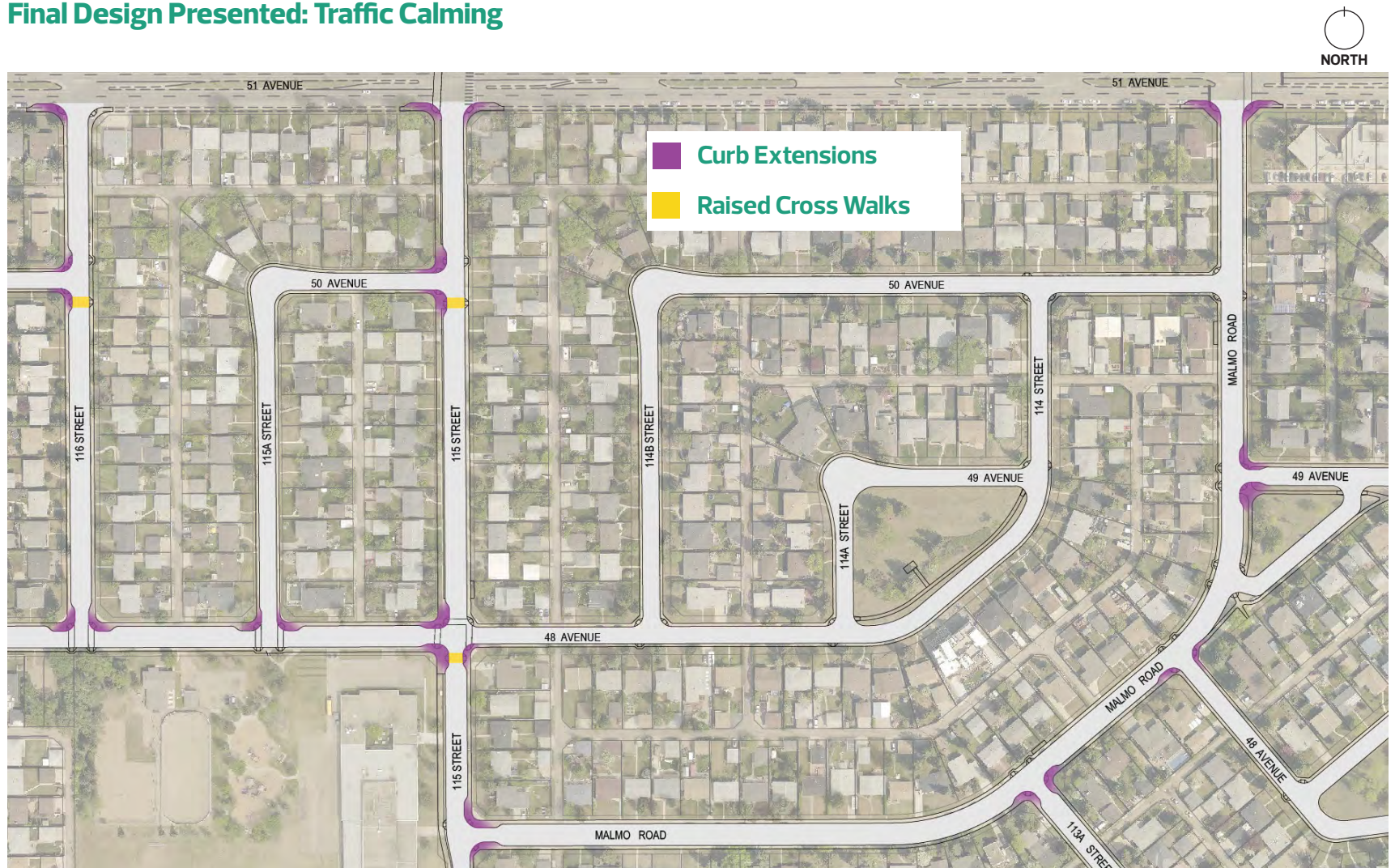
New Curb Ramps





Traffic Calming

Final Design Presented: Traffic Calming





Traffic Calming

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + Curb extensions at T-intersections were proposed only on one side of the intersection to minimize the impacts to on-street parking. The new curb extension design will still meet the traffic calming objectives as supported by the community
- + Raised crosswalks are located on the south side of the intersection to minimize conflicts between people driving and people walking since there are more people driving turning on the north side of these intersections

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + The type of planting in the curb extensions will be designed to ensure that sight lines are not impacted and that maintenance is considered





115 Street

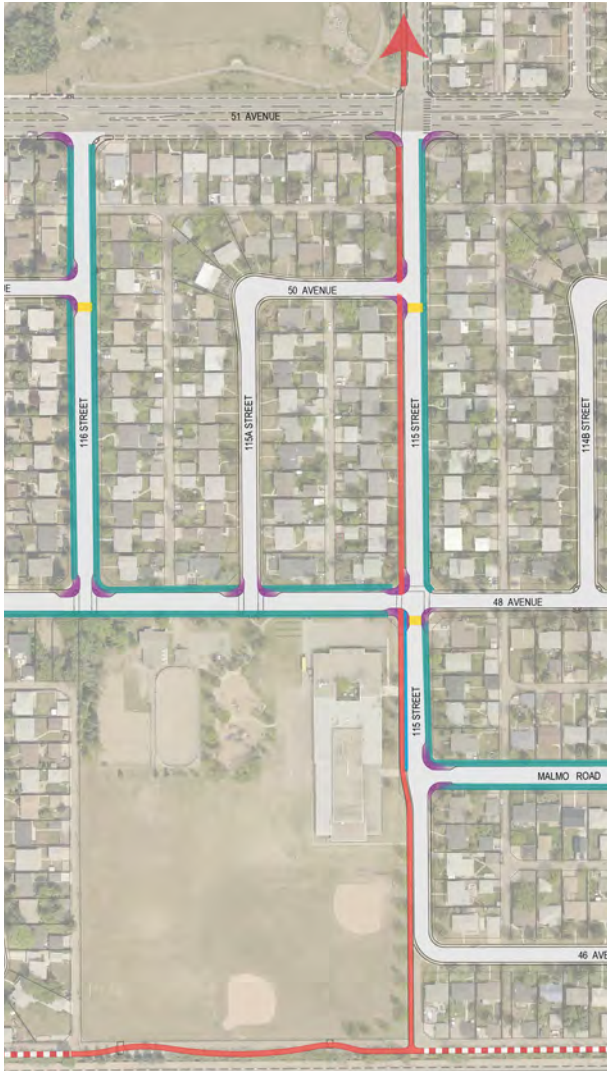
What we heard in January and June 2020





- + The majority of participants supported the option that proposed a shared roadway for people biking and driving
- + The majority of participants did not support the option that proposed raised bike lanes on both sides of the street for people biking due to the loss of on-street parking
- + There was some support for the option that proposed a shared-use path on the west side of the street
- + Participants supported the option that proposed a shared-use path on the west side but were concerned about how the shared-use path works in-front of the school
 - + In June, participants supported the shared-use path on the west side with additional space in front of the school for pick-up and drop-off



115 Street

Final Design Presented: 115 Street



-  New Shared Use Path
-  Curb Extensions
-  Widened Sidewalk
-  Raised Cross Walks





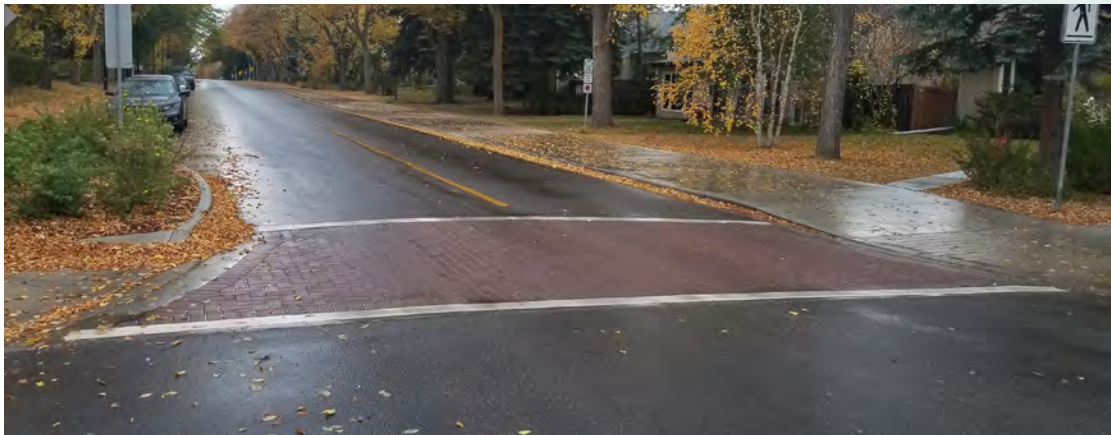
115 Street

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + The option with a shared-use path on the west side of the street was selected to continue, taking into consideration community feedback and the City's broader bike network strategy

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + The width of land required in front of the school will need to be defined, as a section of concrete sidewalk is proposed between the roadway and the shared-use path to allow for the safe loading/unloading of buses. An easement may be required
- + Surface treatment of the shared-use path will need to be defined as it could be paved in either asphalt or concrete depending on existing conditions, maintenance, and constructability
- + Snow clearing and all-season use
- + Opportunity to define the shared-use path from the curbside drop off/pick up area through the use of trees or a planting buffer

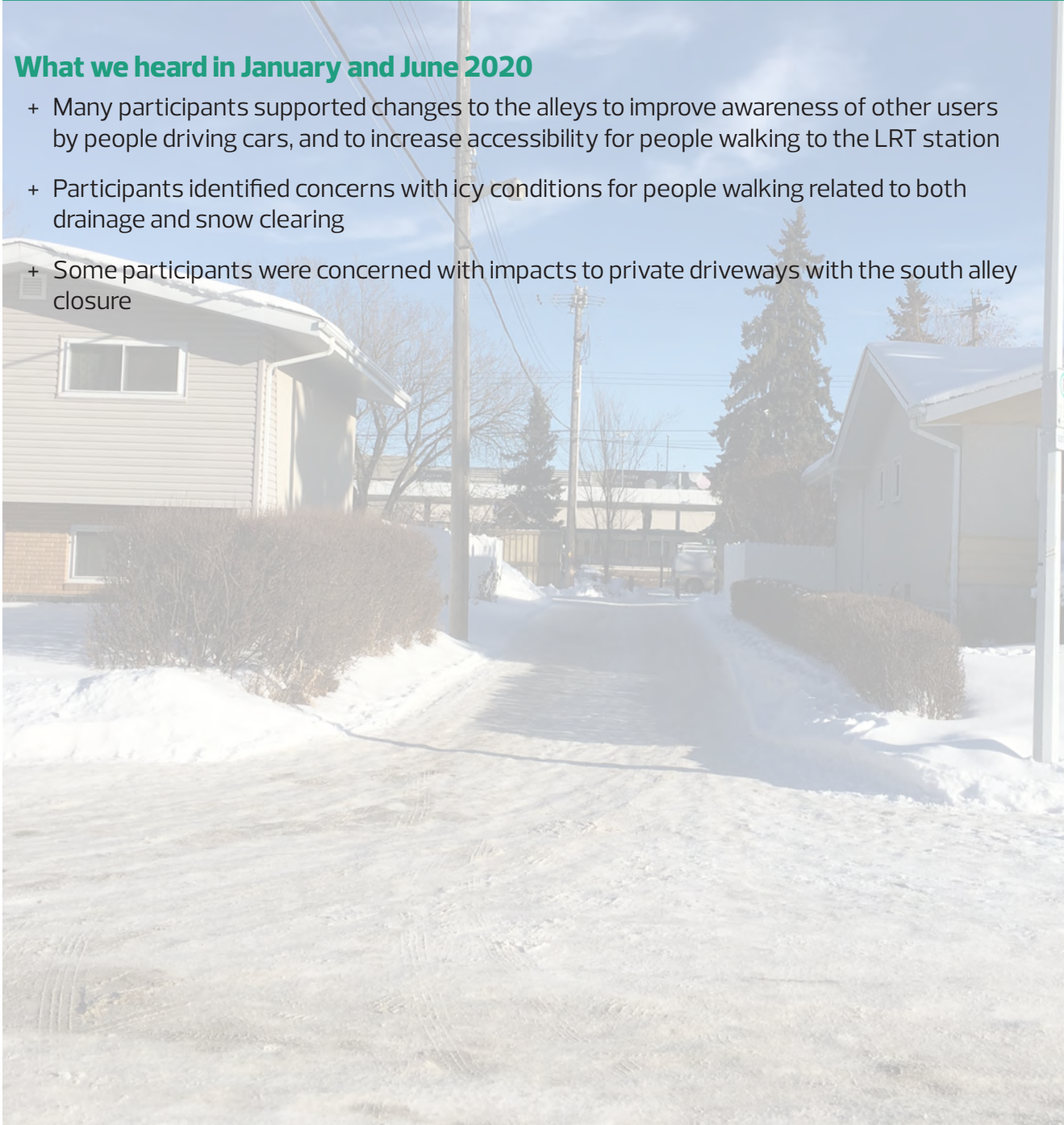




Alleys near LRT

What we heard in January and June 2020

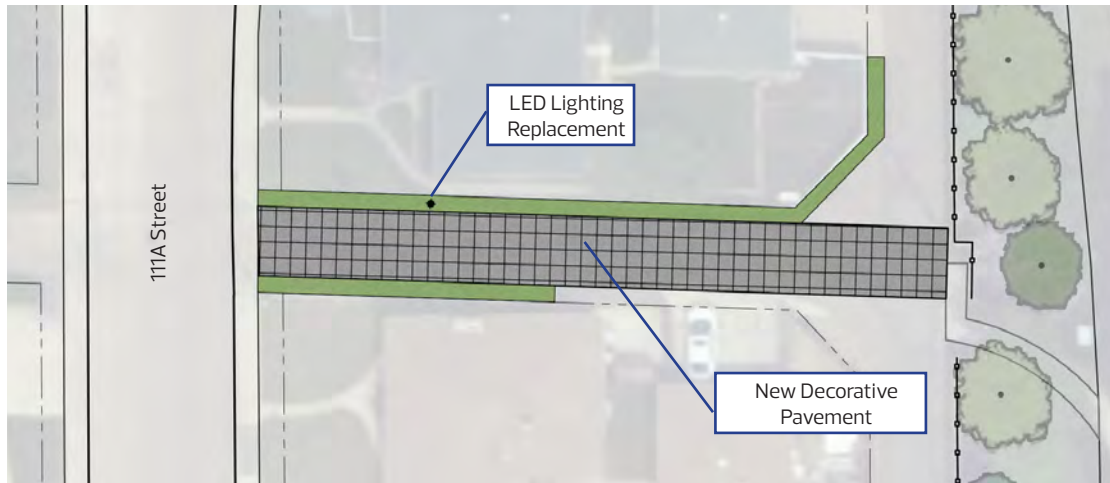
- + Many participants supported changes to the alleys to improve awareness of other users by people driving cars, and to increase accessibility for people walking to the LRT station
- + Participants identified concerns with icy conditions for people walking related to both drainage and snow clearing
- + Some participants were concerned with impacts to private driveways with the south alley closure



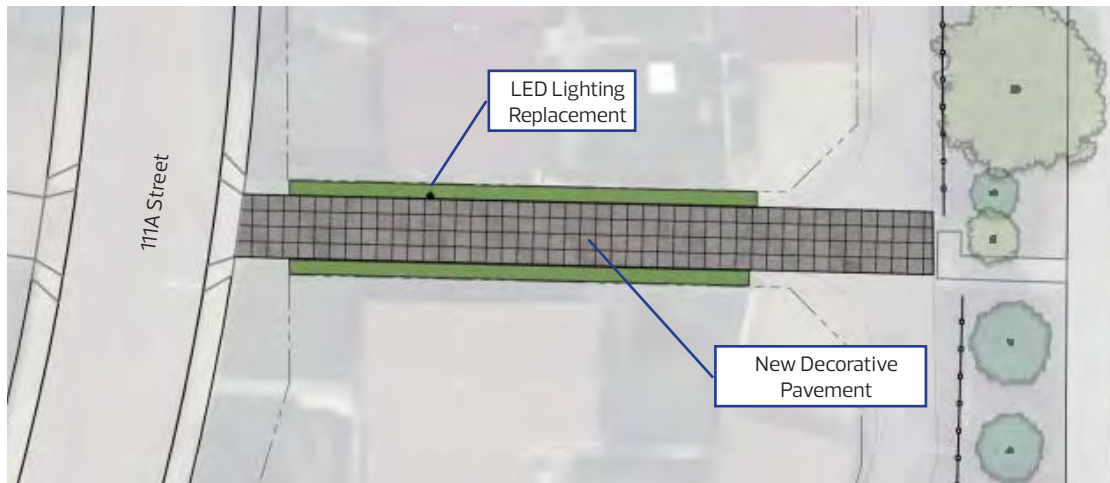


Alleys near LRT

Draft Design Presented: North Alley



Final Design Presented: South Alley





Alleys near LRT

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + The south LRT alley connection will no longer be closed to vehicles and both east-west alleys will be shared roadways

Considerations to Refine the Design

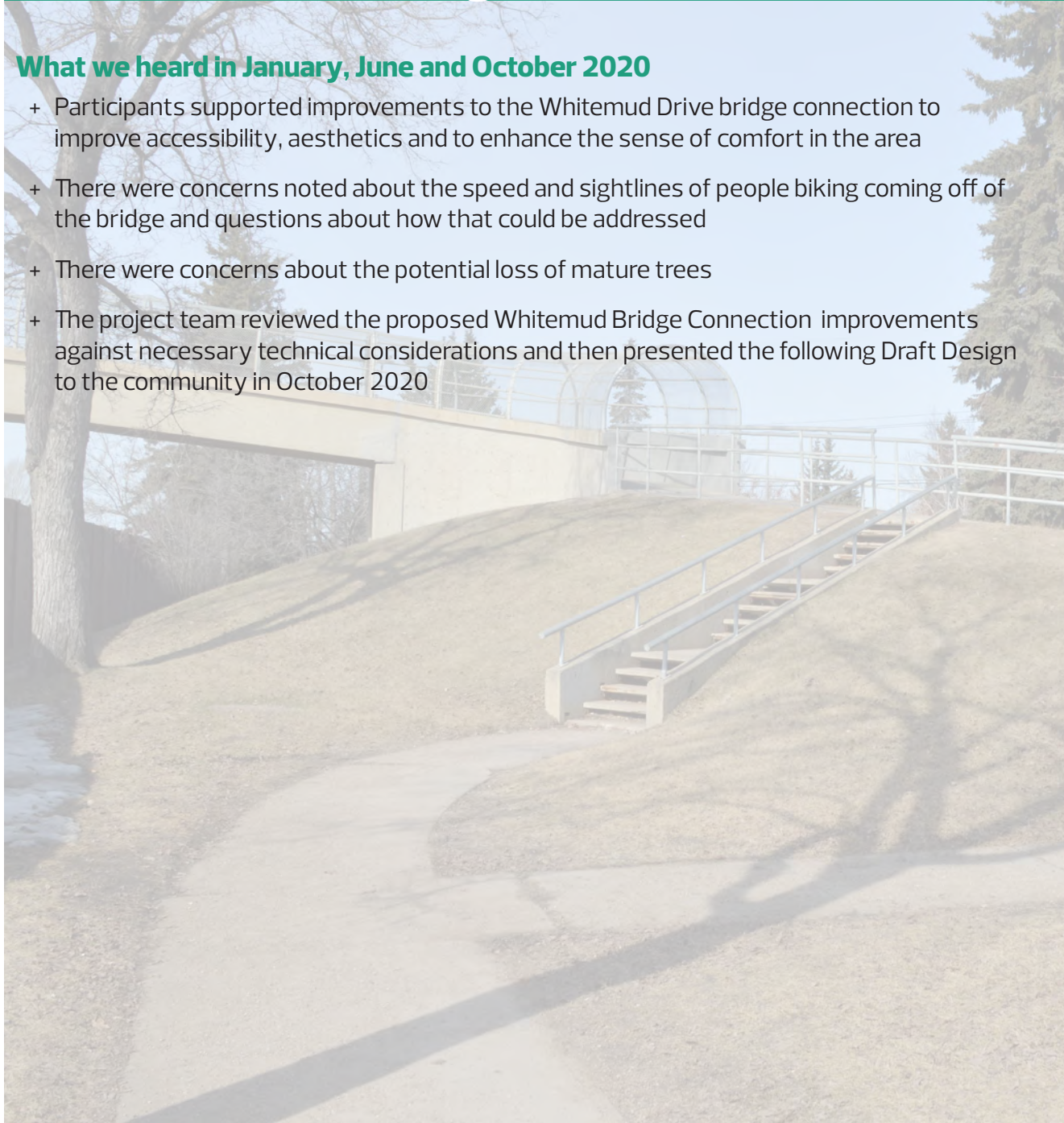
- + Snow clearing and winter maintenance frequency for the shared roadways will be determined by an update to the Snow and Ice Policy
- + Along the shared roadways, lighting upgrades and lighting placement will need to be considered
- + The materials for the shared roadways needs to be determined and could include sawcut concrete and/or decorative surface features such as coloured concrete, sandblasted banding, and paving stones
- + Maintaining convenient access to garages for people driving, particularly for properties next to the south alley



Whitemud Drive Bridge Connection

What we heard in January, June and October 2020

- + Participants supported improvements to the Whitemud Drive bridge connection to improve accessibility, aesthetics and to enhance the sense of comfort in the area
- + There were concerns noted about the speed and sightlines of people biking coming off of the bridge and questions about how that could be addressed
- + There were concerns about the potential loss of mature trees
- + The project team reviewed the proposed Whitemud Bridge Connection improvements against necessary technical considerations and then presented the following Draft Design to the community in October 2020





Whitemud Drive Bridge Connection

Final Design Presented: Whitemud Drive Bridge Connection Plan





Whitemud Drive Bridge Connection

What Changed From the Exploring Options Stage

- + Recreating the bridge connection with a curved path to create a more gradual slope that meets accessibility guidelines
- + Removing the fencing at the bottom of the hill and add new landscaping
- + Reconstructing the staircase
- + Adding a connection between the bridge and noise wall
- + Removing the existing trail from the stairs heading north
- + In order to improve this connection, some trees that are on the hill will need to be removed. These trees will be replaced with new trees.

Considerations to Refine the Design

- + The alignment of the paths coming off of the bridge will be further refined based upon the grading of the area
- + Efforts will be made to design the paths in such a way that impacts to mature trees are minimized
- + A small retaining wall may be required to accommodate the proposed connection that runs between the bridge structure and the noise wall
- + Handrails will be considered for accessibility and to reduce short-cutting
- + Lighting upgrades and lighting placement will need to be considered
- + Provide shrub beds to discourage short-cutting which may damage plants and cause erosion.

Potential Community-Led Projects

There were a few opportunities for improvements that were identified by the community that are not able to be implemented by the Neighbourhood Renewal Program. This section is intended to capture those opportunities so that the community can pursue them as separate projects in the future. The items identified are:

- + Community gardens in the pocket parks
- + Shade structures at the gathering areas
- + A shade structure in Malmo Park near the playground

If the community would like to pursue any of these opportunities, they may do so by contacting their Community League or City of Edmonton Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator.

Next Steps

Following the Draft Design stage, the project team determines what elements will proceed to Final Design, and ultimately, to implementation. These decisions are informed by a number of factors, including input from the community and City business partners, alignment with strategies, policy and guidelines, consideration of technical constraints and available funding.

While this report is meant to be a summary of the Draft Design, some elements of this report reflect the Final Design shared with the community at an engagement event in the Fall 2020. The scope of the neighbourhood improvements and their specific design will be further detailed as we move towards construction in the Spring of 2021.

