



# FORT ROAD OLD TOWN MASTER PLAN

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Prepared by:  
Strategic Areas Services  
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## Executive Summary



*Model of the Old Town Redevelopment Concept*

This document presents a Master Plan for the future redevelopment of the Fort Road Old Town Area. It has been prepared to obtain Council approval for this redevelopment and endorsement of the area as a “Special Development Zone”. It is intended to provide the information necessary for a full understanding of the proposed redevelopment including information on the background of the proposal, the mandate, underlying development objectives and principles, the proposed concept, implementation methods, timing and costs.

### Background

The Planning and Development Department has been working with the Fort Road Business and Community Association to develop a new vision and redevelopment plan for the Fort Road Old Town area. The planning team has worked closely with the Transportation and Streets Department as they have been undertaking a concept planning study for the Yellowhead Trail/Fort Road/66 Street/Wayne Gretzky Drive roadway system.

The redevelopment plan for the Old Town involves the widening of Fort Road and the development of a new urban village with a revitalized commercial sector and a residential community of up to 1,000 units adjacent to the existing Belvedere LRT station.

### Goals, Objectives and Principles

The primary goals of the proposed redevelopment project are to revitalize the historic Fort Road Old Town and to accommodate the increase of vehicular traffic on Fort Road. In doing so the project will result in significantly enhanced commercial activity and further high-density residential housing within walking distance of the Belvedere LRT station, a greatly improved pedestrian environment and increased LRT ridership.

Once implemented the proposed redevelopment will accomplish the following objectives, which stem from the Belvedere Station Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) 1980:

- Establish a land use pattern which favours ridership of the LRT;
- Provide higher densities close to the LRT station;
- Change land uses from industrial to residential and commercial;
- Combine retail, office and residential uses in projects;
- Establish a pedestrian zone within a 5 minute walking distance of the LRT station;
- Develop a strong pedestrian network integrating public and private properties; and
- Develop city-owned land as mixed use demonstration projects.

The approach to planning the revitalization of the Old Town area was to build on the Plan Objectives from the ARP and to use planning principles adopted from two major North American planning movements:

- Transit-Oriented Development, and
- Smart Growth.

Utilizing the principles associated with Transit Orientated Development and Smart Growth the proposed design concept focuses on building a closer relationship between land use planning and transportation planning.



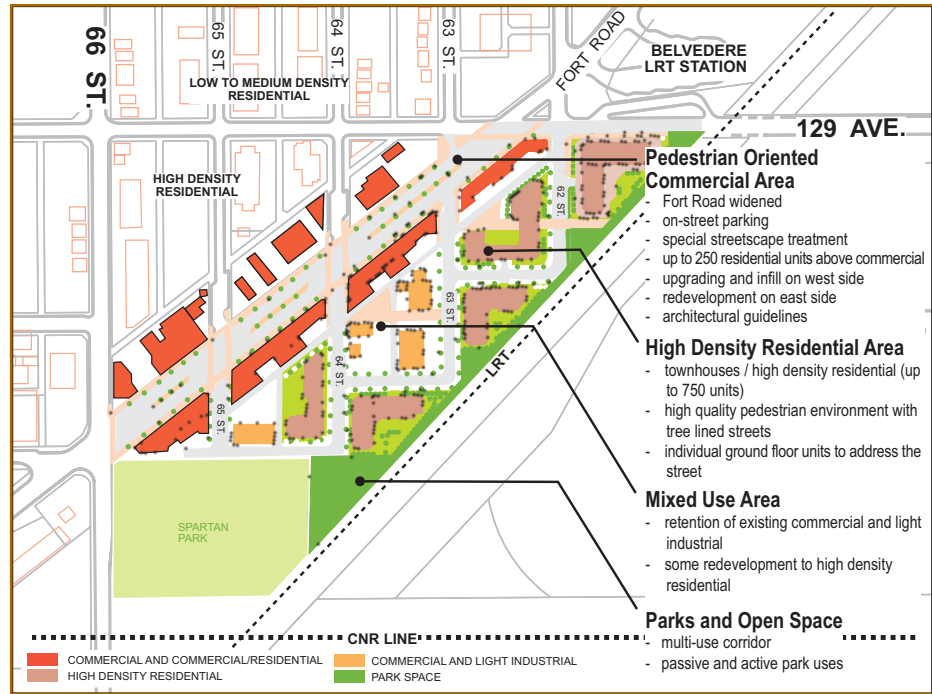
Executive Summary continued



The Concept

As outlined in the map below, this plan will establish the Old Town area as a "Special Development Zone" where significant improvements and redevelopment activity will take place. As part of a strategic three phase implementation process, the improvements and activities include:

- The widening of Fort Road to 6 lanes of traffic with the outer lanes being used for on-street parking and the associated purchase by the City of commercial land on the east side of Fort Road for the roadway expansion.
- The development of high-density residential housing (approximately two hectares) between Fort Road and the CN/LRT tracks as well as the upgrade of existing businesses along Fort Road and the development of new commercial, office, and residential mixed-use developments to create a new urban village.
- The strengthening of the pedestrian orientation of the main street through significant streetscape improvements; the construction of a new roadway/pedestrian circulation network in the high density residential mixed use area.
- The formation of a pedestrian network of sidewalks, footpaths and laneways to connect the community with the LRT Transit Station in conjunction with a multi-use corridor and park system alongside the CN/LRT rail track.



Old Town Master Plan Concept





## Executive Summary continued



### Implementation

A special development group will be created to implement this redevelopment project. The terms of reference and composition of this public/private sector group is described in general terms in this report and will be refined upon Council endorsement of the implementation program. The City has successfully used such a special development group in the 1980's to implement the Cloverdale and Rosedale Area Redevelopment Plans.

The proposed redevelopment will be implemented in three phases, over a period of five to seven years, utilizing the skills from a range of departments and disciplines. The three phases are:

- Phase 1: Project Approval and Start Up
- Phase 2: Preparing for Construction and Redevelopment
- Phase 3: Redevelopment of Old Town

The implementation program will be carried out using a mixture of statutory tools such as plans, policy and zoning bylaws and non-statutory mechanisms such as design competitions, design guidelines, marketing, incentives, education and advocacy. As a major landowner the City will have a significant stake in the success of the project and will also retain control of the outcomes throughout the process.

### Costs and Benefits

A quantitative and qualitative Cost-Benefit Analysis was carried out in order to assess the economic feasibility of the Fort Road Old Town redevelopment concept and justify the proposed plan.

Due to the "place-making dividend" that comes with implementing such a project, upon investing \$4,975,000 into land acquisition and physical improvements, the revenues produced would amount to \$4,471,000, providing a net cost to the City for the land development component of \$503,500.

The cost of implementing the transportation component is estimated to be \$12,025,000, including widening Fort Road in the Old Town by two lanes, acquiring and constructing a new LRT park and ride lot and developing four blocks of the city-wide multi-use trail.

Upon completion of the redevelopment it is estimated that the assessed value of the Old Town redevelopment area (2002 \$) would be \$111 million. This is in excess of \$106 million more than the existing value of the area which is \$4,470,500 (2002\$). The increase in annual municipal property taxes generated through this project would be \$940,000, and the annual increase in LRT revenue would be \$301,000.

Overall the quantitative analysis indicated that implementing the proposed Master Plan would produce a significant long-term economic benefit for the City and for this Northeast Edmonton area. Over a five year period following the implementation of the project, it is estimated the project will generate \$5,287,500 in property taxes and \$1,500,000 in additional LRT revenue.

Other long term financial benefits will be realized through infrastructure cost savings related to:

- maximizing the development potential of an established inner city area;
- the "catalyst effect" resulting in additional redevelopment along Fort Road and adjacent areas; and
- potential further high density Transit-Oriented Developments initiated as a result of this TOD demonstration project.

From a financial perspective the Cost-Benefit Analysis supports the proposed Old Town redevelopment concept as described in this Master Plan.



### Executive Summary continued



### **Conclusion**

Through this document the planning team is submitting the Fort Road Old Town Master Plan to City Council for approval. An implementation budget is being submitted to Council for approval through the Capital Priorities Plan process.

Upon approval of the Master Plan, the team will revise the Belvedere Station Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) and the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw to incorporate the new redevelopment concept, providing the statutory foundation for the Plan and the related implementation program. These materials will be submitted to City Council for their adoption in early 2003.



# 1 Introduction

*The following chapter briefly outlines the proposed Fort Road Old Town redevelopment project. The area subject to this Master Plan is identified and the mandate for the project is described. Finally, previous planning efforts and the planning and development processes that have brought the project to this point are discussed.*



## 1.1 The Master Plan



*Fort Road view south.*

This document presents a Master Plan for the future redevelopment of the Fort Road Old Town Area. This once thriving historic commercial and industrial area is located in northeast Edmonton. The Old Town is in close proximity to the Belvedere LRT Station and consists of a four block area along Fort Road from 66 Street to 129 Avenue.

Land uses in the area are typically commercial and industrial with some adjacent medium to high-density residential uses. However, at present many businesses in the area are suffering the effects of the economic downturn associated with the departure of a significant amount of industry in the area. This has also resulted in the presence of a large amount of both private and city owned land in the area being underutilized or vacant.

Working in conjunction with the Fort Road Business Association and the Transportation and Streets Department, the planning team from the Planning and Development Department has prepared a bold redevelopment concept for the revitalization of the Fort Road Old Town area. Implementation of the redevelopment concept will result in significantly enhanced business activity, further high-density residential housing, a greatly improved pedestrian environment and increased LRT ridership.

The development will involve the widening Fort Road and the development of approximately 1000 medium-high density residential units and mixed-use commercial uses in close proximity to the LRT Station. It will also focus on preserving and highlighting local heritage and providing increased mobility options by developing parks, walking and cycle paths that link the LRT Station, and the Old Town area.

Due to the Old Town's location next to the existing LRT Station and the presence of vacant land in the area, the area is a logical and strategic location for much-needed redevelopment. The resulting redevelopment will have wider implications for the entire Fort Road and Northeast Edmonton region, as it will act as a catalyst to further local and regional development.

Given the area's strategic location, the principles of Transit Orientated Development (TOD) will be applied to guide the development. These planning principles concentrate on building a close relationship between planning for transportation and land use through energy efficient community design.



*The Belvedere LRT Station.*



The proposed Master Plan concept and approach outlined in this report is consistent with results of the qualitative assessment carried out as part of a Cost Benefit Analysis undertaken by a land development firm hired by the City to evaluate the redevelopment concept. The consulting firm, Strategy Studio Inc. has found the following:

- *There exists the potential to create a unique retail district for northeast Edmonton which is street oriented. It will complement existing auto oriented retail, strip and regional mall retail, and big box retail of the area. Although it will overlap trade areas, the unique character created by the Master Plan would satisfy demand for a different shopping, business and residential experience;*
- *The Master Plan will create a vision for the place that private and public participants can work toward. The uncertainty that has prevailed over the past decade will be addressed;*
- *The proposed Master Plan incorporates a mix including retail, office and residential uses. Such a mix has the potential to create an area that appears vibrant and active, an area with an increased sense of personal safety;*
- *The Master Plan honours the human scale and is pedestrian friendly;*
- *The area is well serviced by the Belvedere LRT Station. The plan provides opportunity to accommodate significant residential and commercial office densities”.*

Once implemented the plan will accomplish three major objectives:

- It will re-establish the Old Town as a pedestrian oriented commercial zone (inner city commercial area revitalization),
- It will be a model for Transit Oriented Development, and
- It will be a demonstration project for Edmonton’s Urban Land Intensification Strategy / Smart Choices, an alternative to urban sprawl.

This report has been prepared to obtain Council approval for the proposed Fort Road Old Town redevelopment project and endorsement of the area as a “Special Development Zone”. It is intended to provide the information necessary for a full understanding of the proposed redevelopment. To that end, this report contains the following information:

- i. A brief description of the proposed development including the mandate, identification of key stakeholders, work completed to date and redevelopment influences;
- ii. A description of the subject area, the surrounding locality, project goals and underlying principles;
- iii. A description of the proposed redevelopment concept and associated zoning changes;
- iv. A description of the proposed implementation process including a breakdown of phases and proposed timing, and identification of the project’s costs;
- v. Conclusions and recommendations.



## 1.2 Master Plan Area

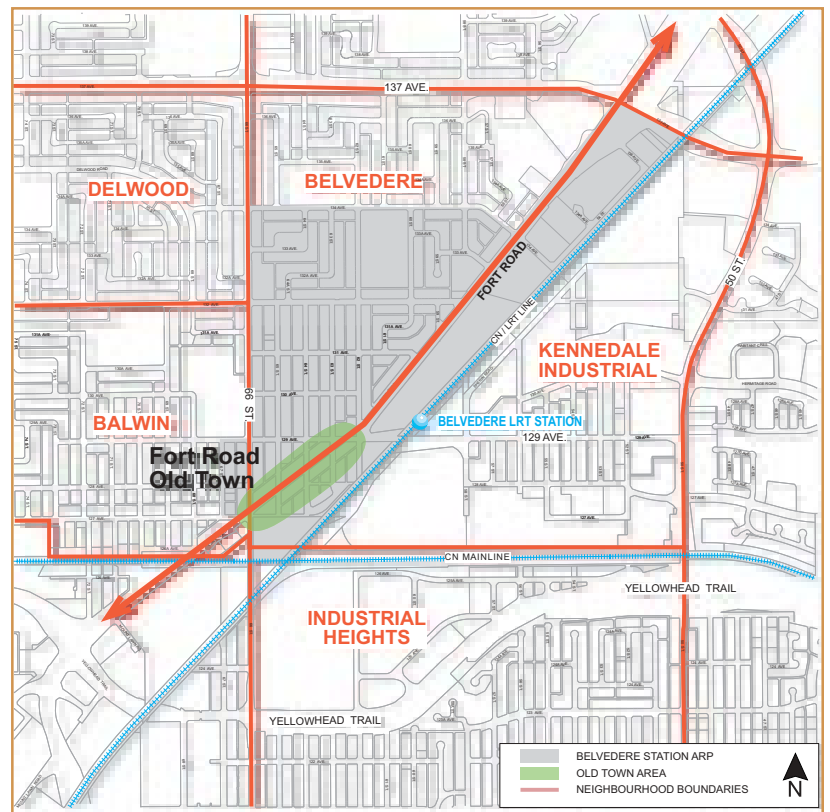
The Fort Road Old Town Master Plan Area ('Old Town') is an older inner city area located in Northeast Edmonton, in the community of Belvedere.

The Old Town is located approximately 10 minutes drive from Downtown Edmonton and is connected to other parts of the city via the Yellowhead Trail located 1km to the south. Downtown Edmonton and the University of Alberta in south Edmonton are also easily accessible via a 15-minute ride along the LRT Line (see map 1).



Map 1: City Context

The Old Town is centred along Fort Road, extending from 66 Street to 129 Avenue. It is contained within the area subject to the Belvedere Station Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP). The residential areas of Balwin and Delwood lie to the west of Belvedere, while the industrial areas of Kennedale Industrial, Industrial Heights and Yellowhead Trail lie to the south and east (see map 2).



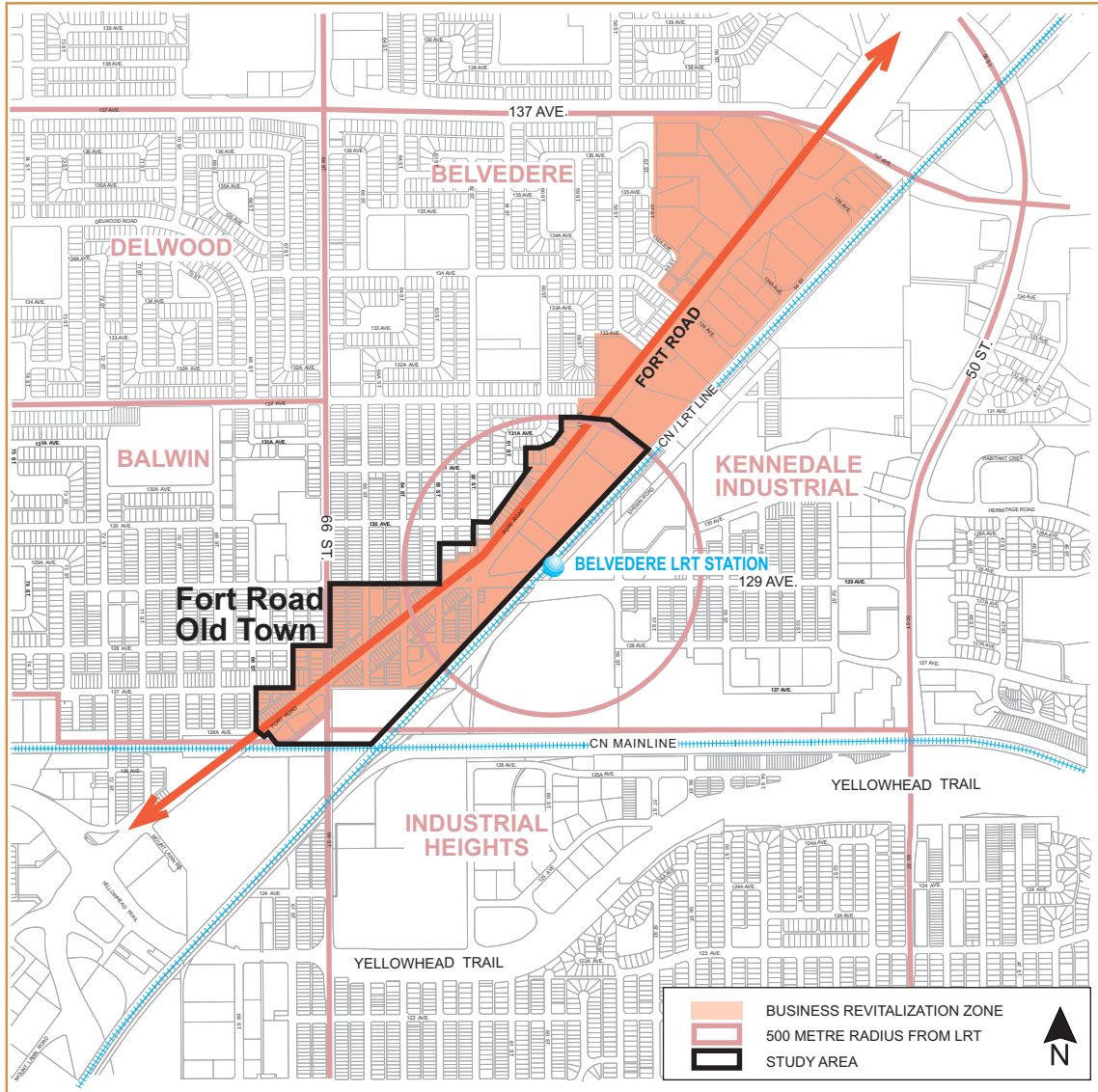
Map 2: Context Within Northeast Edmonton



## Fort Road Old Town Master Plan

For the purposes of this Master Plan, the Study Area boundary extends beyond the core of the Old Town – it stretches along Fort Road from the CN mainline on the south to approximately 132 Avenue on the north. It effectively encompasses the southern section of the Fort Road Business Revitalization Zone and falls within a 5 minute walking distance or a 500 metre radius of the Belvedere LRT Station (see map 3).

Map 3: Study Area



### 1.3 Mandate

The mandate to undertake the proposed redevelopment comes from numerous City of Edmonton plans, policy documents and bylaws.


These include:

- Belvedere Station Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) Bylaw No. 5988, 1980;
- Northeast Light Rail Transit Corridor Study, 1978;
- Plan Edmonton, 1998 Bylaw No. 11777, 1998;
- Transportation Master Plan, Bylaw No. 11778, 1999.

Table 1 identifies how each of these documents provides a mandate for the proposed redevelopment of Fort Road Old Town.



Table 1: Mandate for the Redevelopment Project

City of Edmonton Document	Selected Supporting Policies and Strategies
<p><b>Belvedere Station ARP - Bylaw No. 5988, 1980</b></p> <p><b>Northeast Light Rail Transit Corridor Study, 1978 (NTS)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transit-Oriented Development:</b> “To establish a pattern of land use and development which will favour ridership of the light rail transit. This involves the provision of higher densities close and convenient to the stations, and a general land use change from the existing industrial uses adjacent to the tracks to residential and commercial uses” (ARP Sec 1.2);</li> <li>• <b>Residential Close to LRT:</b> “Housing should be developed in close proximity to the LRT Station, primarily in the Fort Road commercial strip area” (ARP Sec 3.7)(NTS Rec 9);</li> <li>• <b>Office Space:</b> “Sufficient amounts of office space should be permitted adjacent to the LRT stations in order to encourage passenger movement in both directions. Office space should be encouraged in mixed use projects next to the stations” (ARP Sec 3.9) (NTS Rec 11);</li> <li>• <b>Mixed Use:</b> “Retail, office and residential uses should be combined in projects located immediately adjacent to the station and in the vicinity of the Fort road commercial strip” (ARP Sec 3.10) (NTS Rec 12);</li> <li>• <b>Demonstration Projects:</b> “Develop city-owned land as mixed-use demonstration projects” (ARP Sec 3.10b);</li> <li>• <b>Open Space:</b> “Existing open space should be preserved, and new open space should be provided in landscaped strips adjacent to the LRT and through large development projects in the vicinity of stations” (NTS Rec 15);</li> <li>• <b>Pedestrian Circulation:</b> “A pedestrian priority zone should be established within a 5 minute walking distance of the LRT station. Within this zone, a strong pedestrian network integrating public and private properties should be developed” (ARP Sec 3.13) (NTS Rec 17).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Plan Edmonton, 1998</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Land Use:</b> “Place high priority on the effective and efficient use of land” (Strategy 1.1.12);</li> <li>• <b>Transit-Orientated Development:</b> “Promote intensification of development around transportation corridors and employment areas” (Strategy 1.3.4);</li> <li>• <b>Neighbourhood Redevelopment:</b> “Encourage rehabilitation, redevelopment and infilling to increase the amount of quality housing in mature neighbourhoods” (Strategy 1.5.2);</li> <li>• <b>Commercial Area Improvement:</b> “Maintain and improve older commercial and industrial areas while mitigating the negative impacts on adjacent neighbourhoods” (Strategy 1.5.4);</li> <li>• <b>Mixed Use:</b> “Encourage flexibility in developing attractive and functional residential neighbourhoods in business areas” (Strategy 1.7.3).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation Master Plan, 1999</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pedestrian Facilities:</b> “Provide a system of pedestrian facilities in developed and developing areas to enable well integrated, safe and convenient pedestrian accessibility to activities, amenities and services” (Policy A-4);</li> <li>• <b>Land Development:</b> “Support proposals for development or redevelopment of land which maximises the use of existing transportation facilities” (Policy C-9);</li> <li>• <b>Environmental Impacts:</b> “Support initiatives which encourage the reduction of transportation-induced impact of Edmonton’s natural environment” (Strategic Goal E).</li> </ul>



Two key diagrams from the Belvedere Station ARP which help illustrate the scope and form of development envisioned for the Old Town area in 1980 are:

- A map indicating the geographic area designated as a “Pedestrian Priority Zone”, and
- A cross section drawing showing a transition of density, from the high density development in close proximity to the LRT station to the lower density residential a few blocks away.

These diagrams are still relevant today. The geographic area being considered as a pedestrian zone in this Master Plan is based on the area designated in the 1980 ARP. The proposed density distribution for the Old Town area is similarly based on that shown in the 1980 ARP. The diagrams are reproduced below.



Figure 1: Pedestrian Priority Zone (Belvedere ARP 1980)

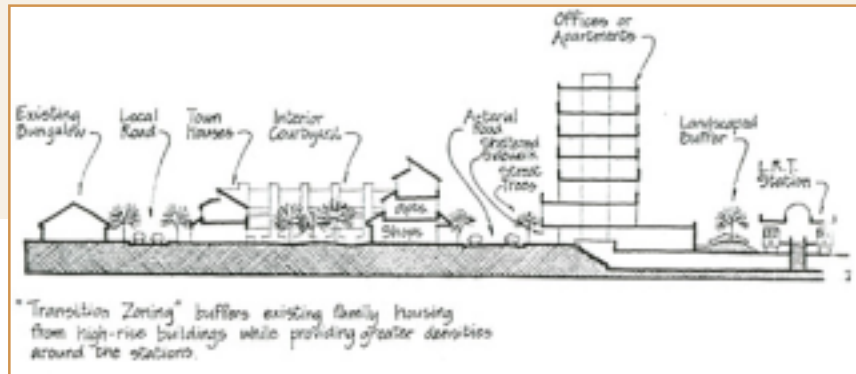


Figure 2: Transit-Oriented Neighbourhood (Belvedere ARP 1980)

Other City initiatives related to the proposed redevelopment are the Yellowhead Trail/66 Street/Wayne Gretzky Drive/Fort Road Concept Plan and the Urban Land Intensification Strategy, described below.

### The Yellowhead Trail/66 Street/Wayne Gretzky Drive/Fort Road Concept Plan

The Yellowhead Trail/66 Street/Wayne Gretzky Drive/Fort Road Concept Plan was undertaken to address the current and emerging long term traffic issues surrounding the interface between the Yellowhead Trail and Wayne Gretzky Drive, 66 Street and Fort Road. The Transportation Master Plan approved by Council in 1999 identified the Yellowhead Trail as an ultimate free flow facility. As such the Concept Plan is required to address the removal of the existing at grade accesses along Yellowhead Trail and the at grade intersection at 66 Street and the Yellowhead.

The recommended Concept Plan involves improvements to the Yellowhead Trail/Wayne Gretzky Drive interchange to accommodate future design volumes and to address existing safety and operational issues. The concept also involves the replacement of the signalized intersection at 66 Street and Yellowhead Trail with a grade separation (overpass) over Yellowhead Trail.

The Concept Plan will define in conceptual terms the widening of Fort Road to six lanes through the Old Town area. The Transportation Master Plan approved by council in 1999, is the primary mandate for the study.

Since the study began there have been two ‘Open House’ events where redevelopment options have been considered and evaluated with the public. A third round of public consultation is scheduled for early 2003 where the recommended plan will be presented in more detail. After this it will be put forward for Council Approval.





### Edmonton's Urban Land Intensification Strategy / Smart Choices

The Urban Land Intensification Strategy is a Plan Edmonton implementation project initiated by City Council through the approval of the *Corporate Business Plan, 2001 – 2003*, and associated budget for the project.

The first phase of the project was the preparation and publication, in 2002, of *Edmonton's Intensification Audit*. The audit includes information on land development in Edmonton and other municipalities, public opinion and perceptions regarding intensification, and intensification opportunities and options.

The audit identified the Fort Road / Belvedere LRT Station area as a significant intensification opportunity involving the redevelopment of an old commercial area and the use of transportation infrastructure. The opportunity to use City land to initiate the project and leverage participation by other property owners is also recognized.

*Smart Choices for Developing Our Community* (Smart Choices), is the second phase of the Urban Land Intensification Strategy. Smart Choices will result in recommendations to City Council on policies and programs to achieve urban land use intensification within the context of a broader vision for the physical development of Edmonton.

Council's decision on Fort Road / Belvedere LRT Station will contribute to the vision for Edmonton's physical development, initiate work on a recognized intensification opportunity and guide the development of intensification policies and programs that may be applied in other parts of the city. The project will be included as a demonstration project in a Smart Choices public showcase of intensification opportunities planned for the first quarter of 2003.



## 1.4 Previous Planning Efforts

Since the late 1970s, the area around the Belvedere LRT Station and Fort Road has been the focus of many planning reports and documents. While all of these documents are different in their focus they all share the common goal of revitalizing this once thriving area of Edmonton.

Table 2 briefly describes some of the studies, planning efforts and events that have focused on development on or around Fort Road in the past 25 years.

Table 2:

### Summary of Fort Road Planning and Development Efforts - 1978 to Present

Event	Description
1978 - North East Light Rail Transit Study completed	The North East Light Rail Transit Study was carried out between 1977-1978 to provide direction for the redevelopment of the four LRT station areas along the Northeast LRT line. Drawing on the principles of Transit Orientated Development, it was a forward thinking document that proposed the rezoning of all areas in the vicinity of the LRT line to accommodate high density development.
1980 Belvedere Station ARP adopted	Council approved the Belvedere Station ARP on September 24, 1980. It was the result of the City of Edmonton's desire to "to maximize the development potential of areas surrounding the new LRT Stations". As a result of this Plan, much of the land in the Old Town area was rezoned to higher density and approximately 635 units of medium to high density housing units were built in the area. This Plan is still in effect today.
1991 Fort Road BRZ Association formed	In 1991 local business owners initiated the formation of a Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) along Fort Road from the CN tracks to 137 <sup>th</sup> Avenue. This established the Fort Road Business Association. Between 1991 and 1998 the Fort Road Business Association had some success in carrying out a number of area improvements, marketing initiatives and the like.
1993 Master Plan completed	In 1993 a Master Plan for the Fort Road Area was prepared for and funded by the Fort Road Business and Community Association. The primary focus of the plan was economic and business development with some physical improvements, education programs and marketing initiatives proposed. While implementation was proposed over a two-year period, very few of the initiatives were implemented.
1998-99 Fort Rd BRZ Association ceased operation	Between 1998 and 1999 the Fort Road Business and Community Association lost momentum and ceased operation.
2000 Fort Road BRZ Association resumed operation	In 2000 the Business Association began again with renewed vigor and enthusiasm. The Association completed a Three Year Business Plan and initiated a number of short term and long term actions, focussing on the development of a new vision and plan for the Old Town area.
2001 Fort Road Old Town planning initiated	A preliminary Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Concept was prepared, a public participation process was initiated and work began on preparing the Old Town Master Plan.



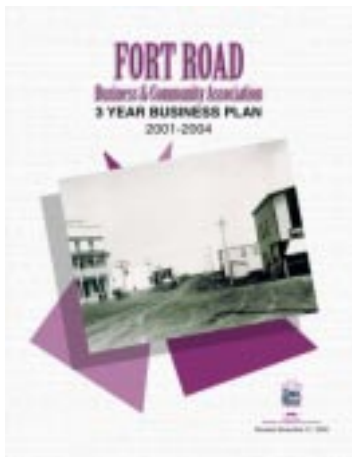
## 1.5 Planning Process to Date

The planning process to date has seen the involvement of numerous members of the public, Fort Road Business and Community Association members and City of Edmonton departments. Some of the key participants are listed below.

### Key Project Participants to Date:

- Fort Road Business and Community Association Members
- City of Edmonton Planning and Development Department
- City of Edmonton Transportation and Streets Department
- City of Edmonton Asset Management and Public Works Department
- City of Edmonton Corporate Services Department
- City of Edmonton Community Services Department
- City of Edmonton Police Services

Fort Road 3 Year Business Plan



The process to prepare this Master Plan emerged out of a process where the Planning and Development Department was asked by the Business Association to help develop a Three Year Business Plan for their area. The Planning and Development Department planning team worked closely with the Business Association on developing the Business Plan in the fall of 2000, with the Association adopting the Plan on November 21, 2000.

The Business Plan outlined several actions to be pursued for the area, covering such topics as: marketing, business recruitment, special projects, physical improvements, safety and security, clean up and maintenance. The Association's Mission Statement as stated in the Plan is:

*“To revitalize the Fort Road Business Area, providing for enhanced business activity, an improved physical environment and strengthened connections with the adjacent communities.”*



Working on the Old Town Redevelopment Concept during the Design Charrette.

Following an assessment of the deteriorated physical environment in the Old Town the planning team determined that it would take much more than a streetscape beautification scheme to revitalize the Old Town area as a pedestrian oriented shopping street. With the area experiencing increasing traffic volumes, the ability of pedestrians to walk comfortably and safely through the area has greatly diminished. Since the mid 1980's there has been an atmosphere of uncertainty about the future development of the area given the City's long term plans to turn Fort Road into a one way couplet through the Old Town.

After a number of working sessions with the Association Board of Directors, it was agreed that the planning team should examine other long term options for the Old Town and initiate a land use planning study for the general area around the Old Town / Belvedere LRT Station area.

The planning process that followed is presented on the following page:



**Table 3: Planning Process To Date**  
**2001**

Date	Public Participation and Plan Preparation Activities
February	The planning team makes a presentation on the planning study process to a special public meeting held by the Fort Road Business and Community Association. At that meeting, Mayor Bill Smith leads a general discussion where several very positive, creative ideas for revitalizing Fort Road emerge. The Mayor strongly encourages the Association and the team to develop a new vision and a new Plan for the historic Old Town area.
February - July	Planning team undertakes detailed site analysis, researches issues and opportunities, meets with Business Association on a regular basis.
July	Fort Road Design Charrette conducted with Planning and Development staff and Business Association Project Co-ordinator.
August	Planning team builds a physical model of Fort Road to exhibit future development proposals. Team develops preliminary redevelopment options for the Old Town.
October	Planning team presents a progress report to the business community at the Fort Road Business and Community Association Annual General Meeting.
December	<p>Planning and Development staff meet with Transportation and Streets staff to discuss Old Town roadway alignment options. Decision made to reconsider the city's proposal for a one way couplet* through Fort Road and to undertake a co-ordinated land use/transportation study and to examine the Fort Road widening option through Old Town in detail.</p> <p>* Refer to Section 3.1.5 'Accommodating Transportation Needs'</p>

**2002**

Date	Public Participation and Plan Preparation Activities
January	Transportation and Streets initiates the Yellowhead Trail / 66 Street / Wayne Gretzky Drive / Fort Road Concept Plan, co-ordinating this work with Planning and Development's land use study for Old Town. Planning and Development prepares redevelopment concept for Old Town and develops physical model of new vision.
March	<p>Planning team presents Old Town redevelopment concept at a special public meeting held by the Business Association, attended by over 80 business community members as well as the Mayor, Ward Councillors and the area MLA.</p> <p>Planning team administers a questionnaire to meeting attendees and later, to other business community members and area residents. Response to the redevelopment concept is very positive with over 90% in support (see figure 3 on the following page)</p>
May	Planning Team presents Old Town redevelopment concept at an Open House for the Yellowhead Trail/66 Street/Wayne Gretzky Drive/Fort Road Concept Plan.
June - October	Planning team prepares Fort Road Old Town Master Plan for approval by Council, undertaking research on implementation process, zoning, urban design guidelines, development costs and feasibility. Planning and Development hires a consultant to undertake a Cost-Benefit Analysis of the project.
October	Planning team (with Transportation and Streets) presents progress report on the Old Town Master Plan to the Fort Road Business and Community Association Annual General Meeting.



The Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Plan Questionnaire was distributed following the planning team's presentation of the redevelopment concept at the Business Association's March 19, 2002 meeting. The above chart provides an overview of the results. For the complete results, refer to the Planning and Development's report – "*Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Plan Questionnaire Summary*", April 2002.

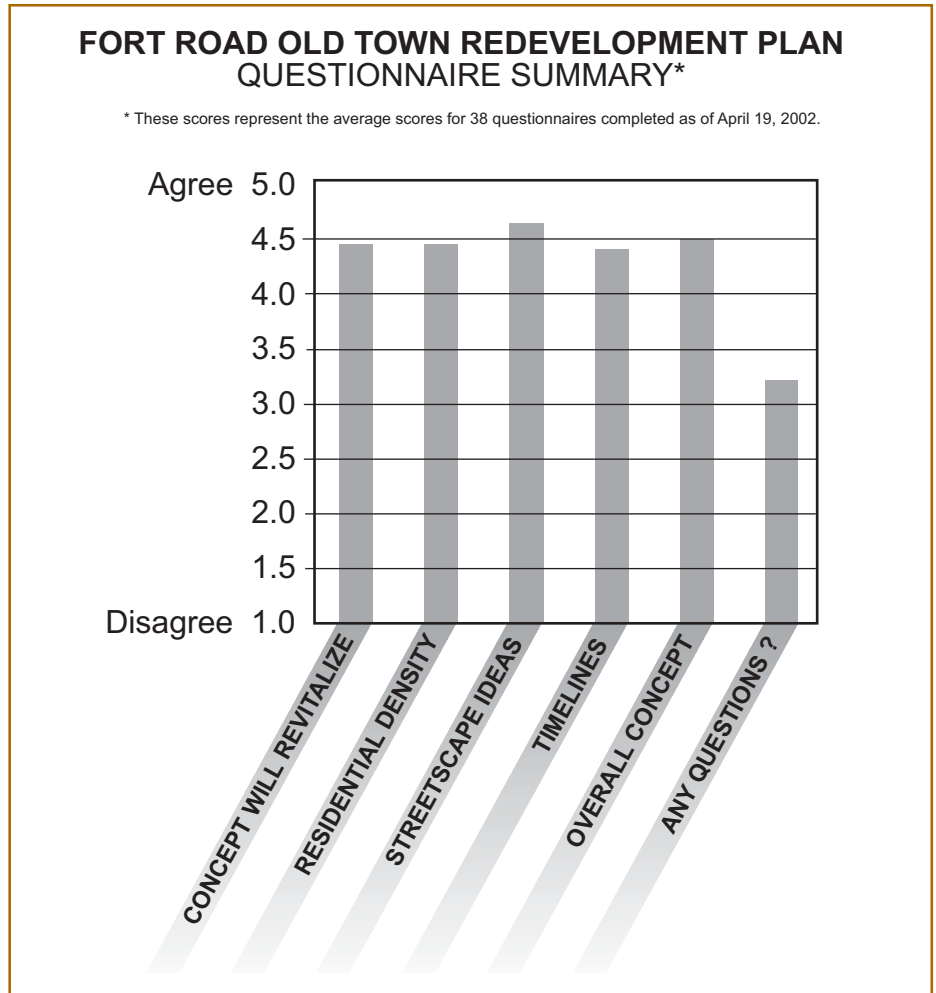


Figure 3: Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Plan Questionnaire Summary



Use of the Fort Road model to exhibit the Redevelopment Concept at public meetings.



## 2 Background Information

*The following chapter provides the background information to the proposed development. The history of the Fort Road area is initially discussed to give context to the proposed redevelopment concept. The existing conditions in the area are highlighted, focusing on the area's general character, land use, transportation facilities, infrastructure and landmarks. Finally, the existing zoning regulations which govern the area are explained.*

### 2.1 Historic Fort Road

The history of the Fort Road area stretches back to the early 1900's when the area served the main wagon trail to Fort Saskatchewan. Initial development in the Fort Road area began with the opening of the Swift Company Packing Plant in 1908. This resulted in the area quickly developing into a hub for the livestock

industry and associated processing. By 1909, the area boasted a few boarding houses, a drugstore, a butcher, a hardware store, a dry goods shop, and the new Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.



*The Transit Hotel.*

In 1910 the greater Fort Road area was established as a small town in its own right, the *Village of North Edmonton* or 'Packingtown'. The heart of this community was at the intersection of Norton Street and Edmonton Ave (now 66<sup>th</sup> St. and Fort Road). After amalgamation with Edmonton in 1913, the area became the industrial centre of Edmonton and developed its unique working class, family orientated character. Packingtown's importance was further reinforced by the fact that it was situated at the junction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Canadian Northern, which were incorporated as part of the CNR in 1918.

Today the only reminders of the old Packingtown days are a few buildings like the Transit Hotel. This hotel was built at the same time as the Swift Packing Plant in 1908 and today it still stands as a landmark and steadfast reminder of the rich history of the area. Another historical landmark in the area is the 10-storey brick smokestack that used to be at the heart of the Canada Packer's plant built in 1936. Today however, this smokestack stands alone in the middle of an empty field, reminding those driving by of what this area once meant to Edmonton.

*Historic Canada Packers smokestack.*





In the 1970s the City of Edmonton saw potential in the Belvedere area and with the development of the Edmonton LRT system, they placed a transit stop in its heart. Their hope was that this would act as a catalyst to further redevelopment. In 1980 the Belvedere Station Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) rezoned land in the vicinity of the LRT line to 'High Density' "to maximize the development potential of areas surrounding the new LRT Stations". Consequently, between 1980 and 1984 at least 635 new residential units were built.

However, this successful redevelopment was marginalised when during the 1980's and 1990's both large meat packing and processing plants, Canada Packers and Gainers, closed down taking many other associated business with them. Since then the area has battled the effects of an economic downturn and today Fort Road is in a deteriorated state, containing a substantial amount of vacant land. It has become a void between downtown Edmonton and the northeast suburbs. Nevertheless, the Old Town still retains many positive attributes of an authentic main street and it is envisaged that it may once again thrive as a special historic "urban village" in Northeast Edmonton.

## 2.2 Existing Conditions

The following section describes the Fort road area as it is today in order to provide a base from which to guide and then assess the proposed redevelopment. Zoning in the Fort Road area is also discussed for this reason.

### 2.2.1 General Character of Old Town



Fort Road view north.

The Old Town area has a largely "mixed use" character. Land use on both sides of Fort Road is pedestrian oriented commercial, with a mix of retail stores, restaurants, offices and auto repair and servicing businesses interspersed throughout the strip. The area behind the commercial uses on the north side of the road is residential, with primarily single family housing west of 66 Street and medium to high density housing east of 66 Street. In the area between the Fort Road commercial strip and the CN/ LRT tracks there is a mixture of small light industries, commercial businesses and vacant land. The Spartan Park baseball diamond is a major presence in this area as well.

The Old Town commercial area is a remnant of the authentic main street from the beginning of the century. Once a thriving business zone with a diverse cross-section of retail and service businesses, the area today contains many vacant storefronts and deteriorating buildings. The auto-oriented businesses that have started up in the area over the years have further moved the area away from a pedestrian oriented shopping area. There is also a significant amount of vacant land in the area, both private and city owned, particularly in the area between Fort Road and the CN/LRT tracks.

Fort Road (formerly Fort Saskatchewan Trail and Edmonton Avenue) was originally two lanes of traffic with two lanes of angle parking. Today, the road is an arterial road with four lanes of fast moving traffic and volumes in the range of between 23,000 and 36,000 vehicles per day. The on street parking that used to serve the businesses in the Old Town was removed in 1999 as a result of the traffic volumes and congestion in the area. To compensate for the loss of this parking, angle-parking spaces were created on the side streets in the Old Town.

The sidewalks along Fort Road are narrow and unattractive for pedestrians especially given the speed and volume of the traffic that passes through the area. In the Old Town sidewalks are in need of maintenance and are devoid of street trees, benches, pedestrian lighting or any other pedestrian amenities.

Despite the general deterioration of the area, the Old Town retains many of its positive characteristics. This includes a number of its original buildings, a continuous streetscape, businesses that all front the street at zero setback, consistent building massing, and a very strong willingness and commitment within the community to see the area revitalized.



## 2.2.2 The Natural Environment, Parks and Open Space



Spartan Park baseball diamond.

The topography over the subject area and surrounds is predominantly flat. Views and vistas within the area are largely defined by the location of roads, the railway and surrounding buildings. There is a significant amount of established vegetation and street trees present in residential areas to the north-west of Fort Road but limited vegetation in the redevelopment area itself. Vacant sites, the CN/LRT right-of-way and the adjacent industrial zoned land are devoid of any significant screening vegetation and primarily support self established pastoral grassland species and weeds.

The primary park and recreation area in the vicinity, Spartan Park, can be found directly to the south of the redevelopment area. The Spartan Park baseball diamond is an important city wide recreation facility used extensively during the summer months. There has been limited development of pedestrian and cycle paths and linkages within the area, however there is potential to connect the northeast with Downtown Edmonton and the Capital City River Valley Park trail system.

## 2.2.3 Transportation

*Working on the Old Town Redevelopment Concept during the Design Charrette.*

Fort Road is part of a major vehicular transportation corridor system in northeast Edmonton. Other major roadways in this system are 50 Street, 66 Street, 137 Ave and the Yellowhead Trail. Traffic volumes on Fort Road are 36,000 vehicles per day between 66 Street and Yellowhead Trail and 23,000 vehicles per day between 66 Street and 137 Avenue.

As outlined in the Transportation Master Plan 1999, Fort Road has been identified as a 'High Standard Arterial Roadway' required 'to facilitate the movement of large volumes of people and goods...(Pg 45)'. As a 'Highway Connector' its purpose will be to connect the Yellowhead Trail 'Inner Ring Loop' in the south, with the future 'Outer Ring Road' in the north. It is proposed that Fort Road will be widened to six lanes to accommodate this.

There are a number of 'Local Roads' 'designed to provide access to adjacent properties (Pg 45)' within the Old Town. Located between Fort Road and the CN/LRT tracks, it is proposed these will also be developed in accordance with this Master Plan.

Figure 4: Transportation Master Plan Concept ( Transportation Master Plan 1999)







### 2.2.4 Municipal Utilities



*Existing service environment along Fort Road.*

The Drainage Services Branch of Asset Management and Public Works has identified that based on a scenario of 1000 residential units developed in the identified study area, the sanitary and combined sewer systems servicing the area have sanitary servicing capacity and therefore, should not be a constraint to the redevelopment.

They identified that storm and sanitary trunk sewers exist within 127 Avenue and have advised that these should be utilized as the outlets for any new servicing within the area. Existing combined sewers along Fort Road and the lane south of Fort Road can continue to be used for local sanitary servicing of the abutting properties. However, the redevelopment area should as far as possible include the separation of storm and sanitary flows.

To enable this, extensions to local sanitary sewers will be required to connect them to the existing sanitary trunk sewer that is aligned parallel to the LRT right of way in the area and to the sanitary trunk sewer along 127 Avenue.

Some roadway drainage connections to combined sewers exist in the redevelopment area and these should be eliminated as far as possible through the provision of storm sewer extensions. Existing storm sewers within the Old Town redevelopment area may be utilized to serve the abutting properties with appropriate storm water management measures.

Storm sewer system capacity is a constraint that can be addressed through the incorporation of storm water management methods to limit the discharge rate from the redevelopment area. The preferred means to accomplish this would be the incorporation of a centralized form of storm water management or other means and Best Management Practices to address runoff water quality issues as well as the rate of outflow.

It is not anticipated that there will be any constraints to providing other commercially supplied services such as phone, water, electricity or gas given the presence of existing infrastructure in the surrounding locality.

### 2.2.5 Landmarks

Major landmarks in the area include the Canada Packers historical smoke stack standing at a height of 50 metres. Located to the south east of the subject area it is a monument to the packing industry that once thrived in the area. In the same way, the historic listed (Category B) Transit Hotel located on the corner of 66<sup>th</sup> Street and Fort Road defines the area and stands testament to the transportation hub the area once was. As a significant landmark it also acts as an entryway into the Fort Road Old Town business area.

### 2.2.6 Zoning

The commercial land in the Old Town study area is zoned CB1 (Low Intensity Business), CO (Commercial Office) and CNC (Neighbourhood Convenience Zone). The purpose of the CB1 zone is "to provide for low intensity commercial, office and service uses located along arterial roadways that border residential areas". The purpose of the CO zone is "to provide for medium intensity office, commercial and residential development in the inner city, around Light Rail Transit station areas or other locations offering good accessibility by both private automobile and transit". The purpose of the CNC Zone is "to provide for convenience commercial and personal service uses, which are intended to serve the day-to-day needs of residents within residential neighbourhoods".

The Old Town is also subject to the Pedestrian Commercial Shopping Street Overlay. This overlay is aimed at maintaining the pedestrian character of shopping streets in close proximity to residential areas. In summary, it includes such development regulations as:

- Buildings shall have a maximum frontage of 10.06 m, or a frontage that is consistent with other sites;



- Buildings shall have a zero setback or a setback of up to 2.5 m to accommodate street related activities such as sidewalk cafes;
- At grade frontage shall be developed for commercial uses;
- Vehicular access shall be restricted to the abutting lanes to preclude breaks in the street façade; and
- New developments and major renovations are to include such things as entrance features, outdoor sitting areas, canopies, landscaping that lend visual interest and human scale to development.

Land directly to the west of the Old Town is primarily zoned for medium to high density residential uses. This includes land zoned RA9 (High Rise Apartment) and RA8 (Medium Rise Apartment). The purpose of these zones is to provide for high rise and medium rise apartment buildings respectively. Land further west is zoned to provide for low density residential and some row housing.

The area along Fort Road north of the Old Town has the character of a highway commercial strip and is subject to the Major Commercial Corridors Overlay. The purpose of this overlay is “to ensure that development along Major Commercial Corridors is visually attractive and that due consideration is given to pedestrian and traffic safety”.

To the south and east of the Old Town, land is primarily zoned for industrial uses based on the historical presence of the meatpacking industry, although much of this land now lies vacant.



### 3. Redevelopment Influences, Goals and Principles

*The following chapter provides an overview of the primary influences, opportunities and constraints affecting the Old Town area. The goals and objectives developed for the project are discussed as are the planning principles which underlie the approach to the redevelopment project. The planning principles, which stem from two major North American planning movements – Transit-Oriented Development and Smart Growth – are explained.*

#### 3.1 Redevelopment Influences

Some of the key factors and conditions influencing the redevelopment of the Old Town are described in the following sections. Viewed as opportunities or constraints they provide the rationale for the adoption of the proposed concept plan.

##### 3.1.1 Deterioration in the Fort Road Area

As discussed earlier, the Old Town Fort Road area has deteriorated considerably in the last 20 years. Revitalisation of the area is clearly required and there is significant support from the surrounding business community for major change in the area.

##### 3.1.2 Presence of Vacant and Under-utilised Land



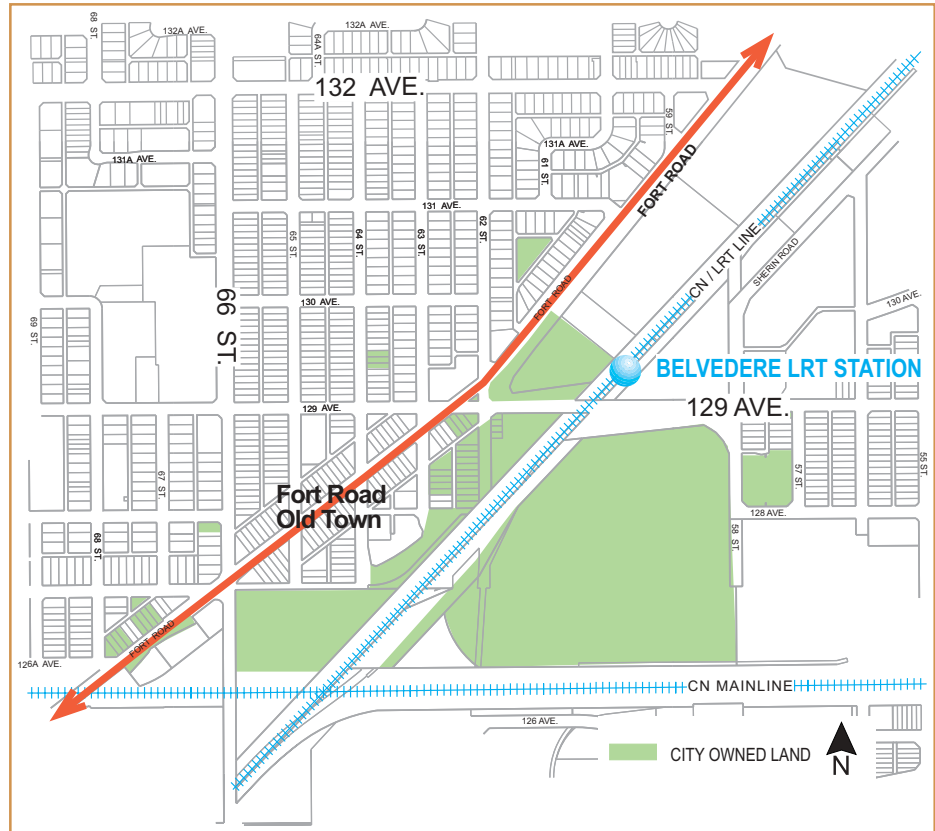
*Vacant land in the Old Town redevelopment area.*

The presence of a large amount of vacant and under-utilised land in the area provides an excellent opportunity to redevelop the area in a holistic way. Where large areas of vacant land exist, development can occur faster and on a larger scale. In addition, the City of Edmonton owns a large amount of land in the Old Town area, previously acquired for the transportation bypass (see map 4).

Where large-scale plans such as this Master Plan are approved, the implementation can be phased, managed and monitored by the City to ensure the development goals and objectives are met. The City will control the release of property, ensuring it is only sold to approved developers whose proposals and practices meet the policy and criteria established through the Master Plan, the Belvedere Station ARP and associated design guidelines.

##### 3.1.3 Fort Road History

The Fort Road area has a significant history associated with it. This is not only demonstrated through the existing historic structures and landmarks but also through the stories, photographs, memorabilia and the obvious commitment to the area, found within the surrounding community. This history gives the Fort Road Old Town area a story and a 'sense of place'. Building on this history there is an opportunity to create a theme. This will not only preserve the unique 'sense of place', but also provide a mechanism to encourage consistent built form, colour, architecture and the like. Support has emerged for a Western Theme for the area. As a consequence design guidelines will set out how this theme can be implemented in new and existing development.



Map 4: City Land Ownership in Old Town Area



Vacant land in the Old Town redevelopment area



Vacant land, view north towards the LRT Station.



### 3.1.4 Location of LRT Station

The Old Town area is located within 500 metres of the Belvedere LRT Station. Since the late 1970's the City of Edmonton has recognised the advantages of locating high-density residential development and associated mixed uses within close proximity to an LRT Station. The Old Town has already experienced redevelopment to high density residential uses as a result of this earlier policy direction.

### 3.1.5 Accommodating Transportation Needs



Fort Road view north under the CN train trestle.

Accommodating a future increase in traffic along Fort Road has been on the agenda of the City since the early 1980's. The long term plan to widen Fort Road to six lanes from Yellowhead Trail to 137 Avenue has been in effect since that time. The City owns a sufficiently wide right-of-way between 129 and 137 Avenues to accommodate an expansion to six lanes. However, it does not have a sufficient right-of-way between Yellowhead Trail and 129 Avenue.

Over the years, the City has considered different options for accommodating increased traffic flow through the Old Town area.

#### One Way Couplet Option

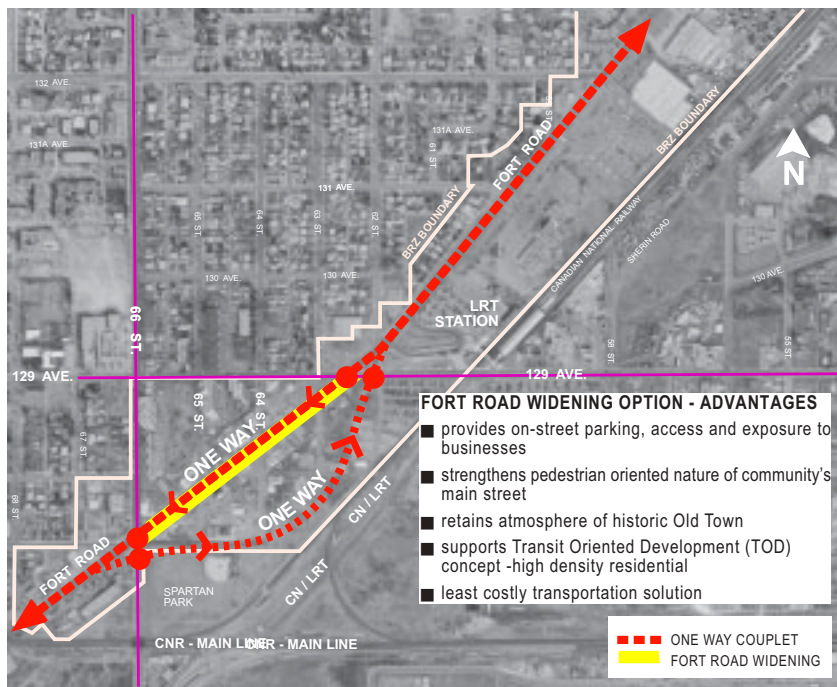
In the mid 1980s city policy proposed the development of a bypass road around Fort Road. A one way couplet would be created by constructing a three lane road to the east of Fort Road, running adjacent to the LRT/CN rail tracks. This new roadway was to bypass the Old Town from a point south of 66 Street and join up to Fort Road north of 129 Avenue (near the LRT Station).

Under this one way couplet concept the existing Fort Road was to be converted to a one way south-bound road and the new road to the east would be one way north-bound. The Transportation and Streets Department has retained the right-of-way to accommodate this since the mid 1980's.

#### Fort Road Widening

Based on a dual commercial revitalization / transportation planning approach for the Fort Road area, it was decided in a series of meetings in late 2001 to consider a new option for the Fort Road Old Town. This option was based on widening Fort Road to six lanes by purchasing an additional 10 metres on the east side of Fort Road, removing or relocating the affected buildings and businesses. The widening option was ultimately chosen by both Planning and Development and Transportation and Streets for several reasons. It was not only the least expensive, but it also created the opportunity and space to develop an urban village with a new pedestrian-oriented commercial area and high density housing adjacent to the Belvedere Transit Station.

It is estimated that the one way couplet would cost \$2.4 million to construct while the widening option would cost \$2 million. In terms of construction costs alone therefore, the widening option would save the City an estimated \$400,000.



Map 5: Fort Road Widening and One-Way Couplet Options



### 3.1.6 Demonstration Project for Future Development

As a high density residential, mixed use transit orientated development, the proposed development is an excellent example of what the City is aiming to achieve through the 'Urban Land Intensification Strategy' / 'Smart Choices for Developing Our Community'.

This project could be seen as a demonstration project for redevelopment around the other three at grade LRT stations along the Northeast LRT line as well as future at grade stations along southern extensions of the LRT system.

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## 3.2 Project Goals, Objectives and Planning Principles

### 3.2.1 Project Goals

The proposed design concept focuses on building a closer relationship between land use planning and transportation planning.

The goals of the proposed redevelopment project are to revitalize the historic Fort Road Old Town and to accommodate the increase of vehicular traffic on Fort Road. In doing so the project will provide for increased housing, increased commercial activity and job growth in a pedestrian-oriented environment within walking distance of the Belvedere LRT station.

Other goals are to preserve and highlight local heritage and provide increased mobility options by developing parks, walking and cycle paths and tracks that link the LRT Station, residential, recreational and commercial areas.

### 3.2.2 Project Objectives

The objectives for the redevelopment project stem from the Plan Objectives as set out in the Belvedere Station ARP. The key objectives from the ARP are presented in section 1.3, table 1 of this report and are paraphrased here:

- Establish a land use pattern which favours ridership of the LRT;
- Provide higher densities close to the LRT station;
- Change land uses from industrial to residential and commercial;
- Combine retail, office and residential uses in projects;
- Establish a pedestrian zone within a 5 minute walking distance of the LRT station;
- Develop a strong pedestrian network integrating public and private properties; and
- Develop city-owned land as mixed use demonstration projects.

### 3.2.3 Planning Principles - Transit-Oriented Development and Smart Growth

The approach to planning the revitalization of the Old Town area was to build on the Plan Objectives from the ARP and to use planning principles adopted from two major North American planning movements:

- Transit-Oriented Development; and
- Smart Growth.

**Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)** refers to intensive, comprehensive, pedestrian-friendly development that is built within easy walking distance of a major transit station and generally includes a compact mix of different land uses that by design, are orientated to promote pedestrian activity.



**Smart Growth** refers to the same kind of compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development patterns and land reuse, but focuses the principles on a larger scale to address issues associated with urban sprawl.

Situated in close proximity to the LRT station with further development potential, the proposed Old Town redevelopment project is ideally located to accommodate the principles associated with **TOD** and with **Smart Growth**. These principles are described in more detail below.

## Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

“Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a mixed-use community within an average 2,000-foot walking distance of a transit stop and core commercial area. TOD’s mix residential, retail, office, open space, and public uses in a walkable environment, making it convenient for residents and employees to travel by transit, bicycle, foot, or car”. Source: Peter Calthorpe, *The Next American Metropolis*

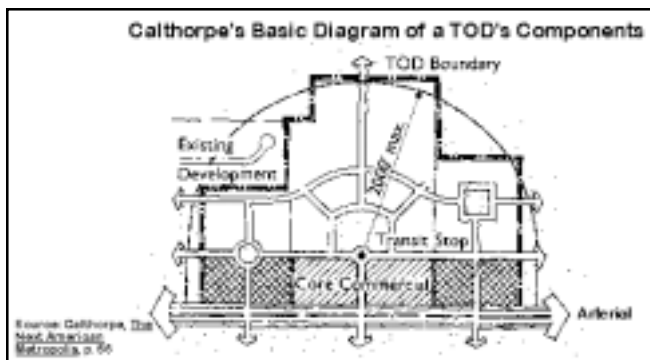


Fig. 5:  
Diagram of a Basic Transit-Oriented Development  
Source: *The Next American Metropolis*, Peter Calthorpe

TOD’s offer an alternative way of creating neighbourhoods by putting more emphasis on creating options for residents. Neighbourhoods include a range of housing options, jobs, retail and commercial services, and recreational opportunities all within easy access of transit services.

Land uses in TOD’s are linked with convenient pedestrian walkways, and parking is managed to discourage dependence on the automobile. Urban open spaces and parks become focal points for community activity while streets provide a setting for social interaction and active community life with wide sidewalks, street trees, and seating for pedestrians. Through integration of land uses, a more compact form, and more responsive designs, this form of

development provides an opportunity to create a more liveable community here in Edmonton.

### Key Elements of a Transit-Oriented Development

#### 1. Proximity To Transit

- central to the TOD concept is the location of a major transit stop at the core of the development;
- in the case of the major, or urban TOD, the transit stop should be connected to an express bus line;
- the highest densities of use will locate closest to the main transit stop;
- by locating housing, employment and services around a transit stop, you dramatically increase the ability for a resident to get around without depending exclusively on the car.

#### 2. Walkable Scale

- the development should be on a scale that is walkable – typically this is understood to be a walk of approximately 5 minutes, or 500 metres;
- when retail, employment and other services are within walking distance and the neighbourhood is designed on a human scale, people are encouraged to walk



By making transit convenient and accessible you decrease the community’s dependency on the car.



View of Portland Train Station  
Source: DPZ Associates

### 3. Diversity / Safety

- a TOD has a variety of:
  - Land Uses: an interesting mix of uses integrated within the development;
  - Core Commercial: office and light industrial to service and retail;
  - Housing: a mix of housing types, densities, price levels;
  - Public Uses: schools, parks, plazas, etc.
- by increasing the amount of residential units around the TOD and integrating them within other uses, an increased “eyes on the street” phenomenon occurs thus creating a safer environment for everyone.

### 4. Enhancement of the Environment

- energy conservation and the reduction of air pollution are both possible due to the lessened dependency on the automobile and from the planting of street trees and appropriate landscaping.

## Smart Growth

Smart growth means using comprehensive planning to guide, design, develop, revitalize and build communities for all that:

- have a unique sense of community and place;
- preserve and enhance valuable natural and cultural resources;
- equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; and
- expand the range of transportation, employment and housing choices in a fiscally responsible manner.

Compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development patterns and land reuse epitomize the application of the principles of smart growth.

Source: The Smart Growth Network <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/overview.asp>

The Smart Growth movement started in the U.S. in the mid 1990's in response to a growing concern that traditional development patterns, characterized by urban sprawl, were no longer in the long term interest of cities. Today, in Canada, several federal, provincial and municipal government organizations have embraced the smart growth movement and have established policies, programs and demonstration projects to implement smart growth at the local level.

In contrast to prevalent development practices, Smart Growth refocuses a larger share of regional growth within central cities and areas that are already served by infrastructure. Smart Growth reduces the share of growth that occurs on newly urbanizing land, existing farmlands, and in environmentally sensitive areas.





*Mixed use and higher densities along regional roads promotes multi-modal 24 hour use*

The ten principles of Smart Growth as defined by the Smart Growth Network are outlined below:

**Principles of Smart Growth**

1. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
2. Create Walkable Neighbourhoods
3. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
4. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Places with a Strong Sense of Place
5. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
6. Mix Land Uses
7. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
9. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
10. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design



*High density housing*



## 4. The Proposed Development

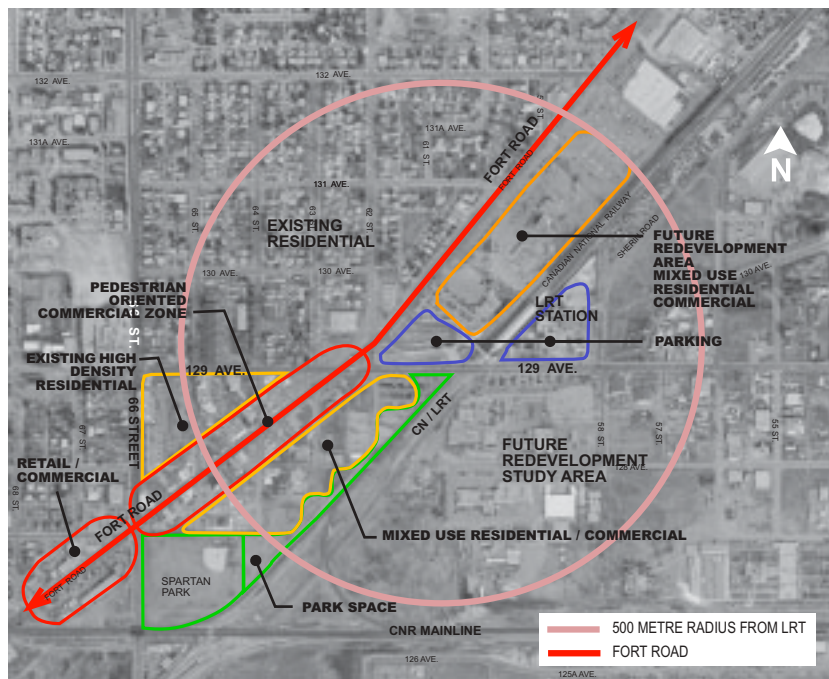
The following chapter details the proposed development concept. The overall planning concept is identified followed by a detailed description of the Old Town concept. Four major focus areas for development are identified, followed by an in depth description of each of these areas. Finally, proposed amendments to the ARP and Zoning Bylaw that will enable the implementation of this plan are discussed.

### 4.1 Overall Planning Concept

As previously discussed, there exists the potential that the Old Town redevelopment will act as a catalyst to further local and regional development and can be used as a demonstration project for future urban development in Edmonton. Given these wider implications an overall concept plan was developed to guide both the proposed development of the Old Town Fort Road Area and to ensure consistency with the future development of the region as a whole (see Map 6).

Future development opportunities identified in the overall planning concept include:

- the development of the Kennedale Industrial Area to the east into a mixed use district that would integrate light industrial and commercial uses, with high density housing on sites close to the LRT station;
- additional high density housing and mixed use development in areas directly north of the Belevedere LRT Station; and
- a Transit Orientated Development project on the former Canada Packers site, characterised by mixed commercial, light industrial and higher density residential uses focused on the development of a future LRT Station just north of the Yellowhead Trail.



Map 6: Overall Planning Concept



## 4.2 Old Town Master Plan Concept

The redevelopment of Fort Road Old Town will be a comprehensive project involving a number of interrelated actions and participants. The discussion that follows describes the project in terms of its four key focus areas:

- Transportation improvements
- Streetscape and amenity improvements
- Commercial and residential development
- Open space and pedestrian circulation

*The Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Concept as it is described here is a preliminary concept at this stage. The Master Plan Concept map is not intended to show an exact, final development layout; rather, the concept depicted on the map is illustrative of the type of general development that is envisioned for the Fort Road Old Town area.*



Map 7: Old Town Master Plan Concept

- Fort Road will be widened to 6 lanes of traffic with the outer lanes being used for on-street parking. The City will purchase commercial land on the east side of Fort Road for the roadway expansion.
- High-density residential housing will be developed between Fort Road and the CN/LRT Tracks. Existing businesses will be up-graded along Fort Road and new commercial, office, and residential mixed-use developments will also occur to create a new urban village.
- The pedestrian orientation of the main street will be strengthened through significant streetscape improvements to create an attractive, comfortable shopping district.
- A pedestrian network of sidewalks, footpaths and laneways will be formed to connect the community with the LRT Transit Station in conjunction with a multi-use corridor and park system alongside the CN/LRT rail track.



The Fort Road Old Town Master Plan Concept is summarized in the sections below:

## 4.2.1 Transportation Improvements



Model of the Old Town redevelopment concept.

### Fort Road Improvements

Fort Road will be widened to six lanes, with a 10 metre expansion of the existing right-of-way. This will be accomplished through the City purchasing properties on the east side of Fort Road between 66 Street and 129 Avenue.

The two new outer lanes of the roadway in the Old Town will be used for on-street parking, until such time that Fort Road is widened to six lanes to the north and south of the Old Town. On-street parking will make shopping in the Old Town easier as well as create an effective buffer between pedestrians and traffic on Fort Road. In the future, when Fort Road is widened all along its length to six lanes, the parking lanes would be used for travel during peak hours in the morning (south-bound traffic) and the evening (north-bound traffic).

The expansion of Fort Road will occur on the east side of the roadway and necessitates the relocation or removal of the buildings on that side of the street. These properties will then be redeveloped for mixed commercial and residential uses.

The sidewalk on the west side will be widened and resurfaced with decorative paving to match the new sidewalk to be built on the east side.

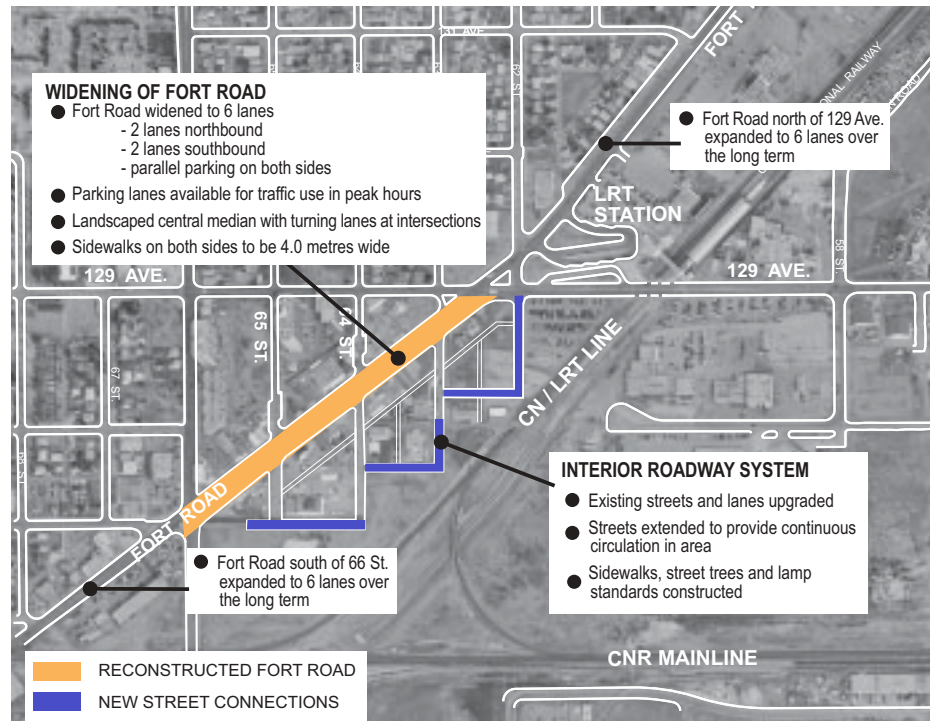
A landscaped median will be constructed down the centre of the street, with turning lanes being provided at the intersections. The median will serve to slow traffic and improve streetscape amenity.

The speed limit in the area will be maintained at 50 km/hr and controlled crossings will be utilized to facilitate pedestrian movements.

Map 8: Transportation Improvements



The new Fort Road through the Old Town would be similar in nature to Whyte Avenue.





**Interior Roadway System**

The roadway system between Fort Road and the LRT tracks will be redesigned to accommodate the new development in the area and to ensure a smooth circulation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic once the area develops. Currently, 62, 63, 64 and 65 Streets do not connect and traffic circulates via the laneways in the area. The redevelopment concept diagram shows one possible roadway system for this interior area – the final roadway system will be determined in the plan implementation stages.

**4.2.2 Streetscape and Amenity Improvements**

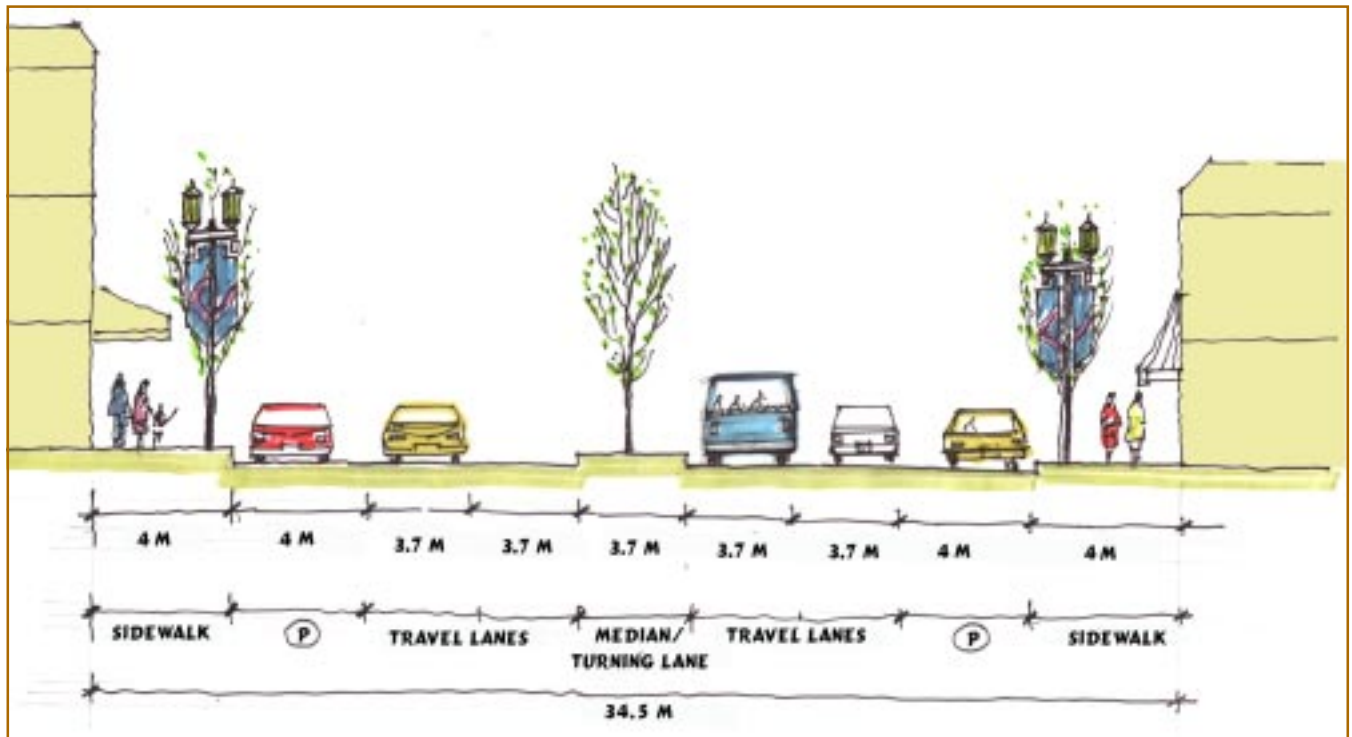


*Creation of a 4 metre sidewalk will allow for cafes and sidewalk furniture.*

Streetscape and amenity improvements will focus on strengthening the pedestrian orientation of the Old Town’s main street to create an attractive and comfortable shopping district through a series of streetscape and facade improvements. The sidewalks will be widened from the existing 2 metre width to 4 metres to provide a generous space for pedestrians to walk and to allow for street furniture and sidewalk cafes.

A western theme will be used to reflect Fort Road’s heritage. Façade and storefront improvements on existing or refurbished buildings will give Fort Road a much-needed face-lift.

On Fort Road street trees will line the newly widened sidewalks and the median strip. Streetscape features such as compatible benches, ornamental lamp standards, attractive pedestrian lighting, garbage bins and signage will create a comfortable pedestrian environment.



*Figure 6: New Fort Road Cross-Section*

The interior streets in the residential area between Fort Road and the railway line will be paved. Sidewalks will also be constructed and lined with street trees and ornamental lamp standards; this will contribute to the pedestrian-orientated residential character of the area.



### 4.2.3 Commercial and Residential Development



High density housing built next to the Belvedere LRT station will enhance ridership of the LRT and increase transit revenues on an annual basis.

Its proximity to Belvedere LRT station makes the Fort Road area ideally suited for the creation of a transit-oriented urban village.

The proposed development will provide for primarily commercial development along Fort Road and high density residential development in the area behind Fort Road, adjacent to the CN/ LRT rail line. The area in between will be mixed use with commercial, light industrial and residential uses.

In total, approximately 750 residential units will be developed in the high density redevelopment area and a further 250 residential units above commercial premises along Fort Road.

There will be approximately 70,000 to 75,000 square feet of commercial space developed along the east side of Fort Road. The improvements to the streetscape environment in the Old Town will also increase the potential for new and upgraded commercial to be built on the west side of Fort Road.

#### Fort Road – Main Street Commercial



Street trees help create attractive public spaces and contribute to a sense of spatial enclosure.  
Source: Cooper, Carry & Associates

It is envisaged that the commercial area along Fort Road will allow for a unique combination of commercial, retail, office, and residential opportunities. Combined with streetscape improvements the historic business district will be developed into a vibrant pedestrian-oriented shopping environment.

The ground floor of the buildings along Fort Road will be commercial units and /or retail shops where the development of plazas, sidewalk cafes, and pedestrian orientated services will be encouraged. Residential and/or office units will be developed on the upper storeys and building design will ensure that all units are easily adaptable to changing market demands. For example, residential units can be easily renovated into offices or vice versa.

Residential units on the upper storeys will create a 24-hour presence in the business district and create a neighbourhood that is both safe and active day and night. Additionally, the mixed-use nature will help integrate Fort Road into, and help support, the interior residential neighbourhood.

#### High Density Residential Area



Old Town Concept model showing high density residential units near the LRT tracks.

The Fort Road Old Town area is ideally suited for high density residential development. Providing higher densities of residential living adjacent to the Belvedere LRT station will enhance the ridership of the LRT, provide transportation and lifestyle choices for Edmonton's citizens, and further support Fort Road as a walkable neighbourhood.

This residential area will house both high-rise condominiums and townhouse developments. Each of the units on the ground floor will individually access the tree-lined streets. This will ensure an attractive pedestrian environment and allow for a possible transformation of the units for use as office space or live/work units.

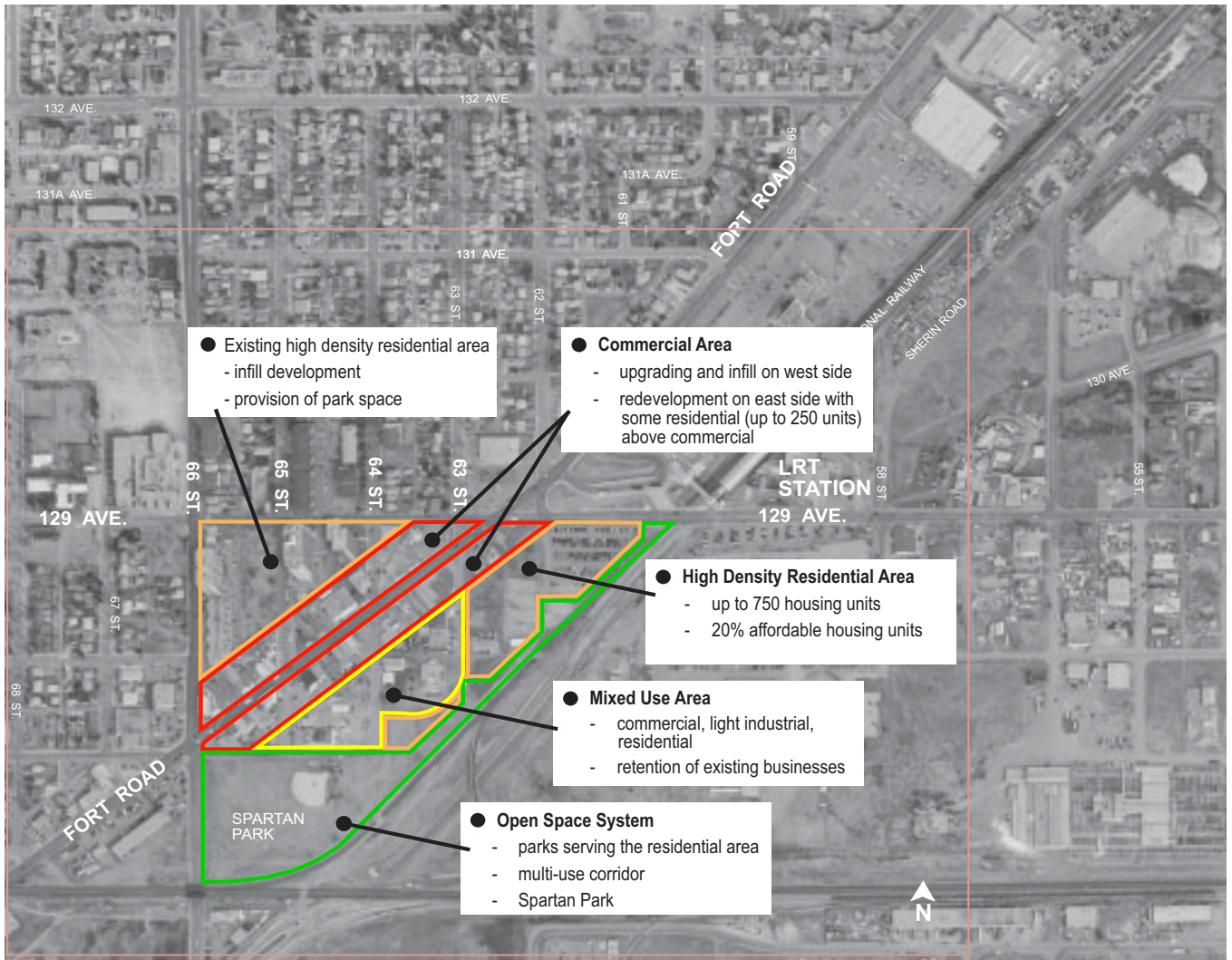
Parking will be accommodated through a combination of on-street parking and integrated parking structures in the high-rise apartment buildings.

Interior courtyards and rooftop terraces will provide attractive outdoor semi-private space for residents while the proximity to the Fort Road business district presents opportunities for casual dining and spontaneous shopping.



**Mixed Use Area**

The area between the Fort Road commercial strip and the high density residential area will be a truly mixed use area. Most of the existing commercial and light industrial businesses in this “middle” area will be retained, while some sites or portions of properties in the area may be redeveloped as high density residential or mixed use buildings. The redevelopment project may also result in the adaptive re-use of some of the buildings in this area.



Map 9: Old Town Area Land Use Concept

**4.2.4 Open Space and Pedestrian Circulation**

One of the most vital elements to creating a transit-oriented neighbourhood is that it is intrinsically walkable. A functional, safe and efficient network of sidewalks, laneways, open spaces, multi-use trails and pedestrian-oriented streets must be created that will provide direct connections between the places that people want to go.



*Different types of pedestrian pathways could be constructed in the redeveloped area.*

The circulation system will be developed to provide linkages within the Fort Road community and to the LRT Station. In addition to the Fort Road sidewalk improvements and the new system of sidewalks in the high density residential area, the laneways in behind Fort Road will be developed as attractive pedestrian links or ‘mews’. Residential housing and trees will line a decoratively paved, safe and well-lit laneway making it more than simply a service corridor.

A series of three or four small triangular park spaces will be developed adjacent to the 30 metre development buffer zone along the CN rail tracks. The park spaces will be of differing sizes and characters and will accommodate both passive and active recreation uses, in response to residents needs.

The linear open space corridor will accommodate a multi-use trail for pedestrians and cyclists, linking Spartan Park to the LRT Station and in future, connecting the northeast with Downtown Edmonton and the Capital City River Valley Park trail system.

Park space will be acquired and developed within or adjacent to the existing high density residential area on the west side of Fort Road. Funds have been allocated for this purpose through a Redevelopment Levy fund that was built up during the early 1980’s as a result of approximately 635 housing units being constructed in the area between 1980 and 1984. A sum of \$508,000 has been set aside for this purpose.

Further open space, in the form of an urban plaza, could be developed within the Fort Road Old Town commercial zone. The final design of the open space system will occur during the first and second phases of the Master Plan implementation program.

## 4.3 ARP and Zoning Bylaw Amendments

Land use and development in the Belvedere / Fort Road area is currently regulated by the Belvedere Station ARP (Bylaw No. 5988) as well as the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw No. 12800). The Zoning Bylaw contains the Pedestrian Commercial Shopping Street Overlay (PCSSO) and the Major Commercial Corridors Overlay (MCC), two overlay provisions affecting land along Fort Road.

Amendments will be required to the ARP and the Zoning Bylaw to accommodate the redevelopment concept and the different land uses being proposed. Proposed amendments and the effects of these proposed changes are discussed in more detail below.

### 4.3.1 ARP Amendments

Minor revisions will be required to policies in the Belvedere Station ARP to incorporate the new redevelopment concept. As indicated earlier in this report, the policy direction contained in the ARP was based on a transit-oriented philosophy and most of the plan objectives and policies are still very relevant today.

Amendments to update the ARP will primarily involve an additional section to incorporate the Old Town Master Plan concept, changes to some overall maps and other minor housekeeping amendments to recognize changes which have occurred in the area since the 1980’s.

### 4.3.2 Zoning Bylaw Amendments

#### **Direct Control Zone**

It is proposed that the existing CB1, CO and CNC zones in the Old Town area be changed to a Direct Control 1 zone (DC1) (see map 10). The DC1 zone provides for detailed, sensitive control of the use, development, siting and design of buildings where this is necessary to establish, preserve or enhance areas of unique character as identified in an ARP.







For the commercial area along Fort Road, the proposed DC1 zone will build on the intent of former CB1, CO and CNC zones. For the high density residential and mixed use areas in behind the commercial strip, the proposed DC1 zone will be based on the RA9 zone while containing provisions encouraging mixed use residential and commercial developments. This latter DC1 zone would also cover the area between Fort Road and the CN/LRT tracks north of 129 Avenue, up to the northern boundary of the property currently zoned DC2 (463).

Overall, the DC1 zone will provide for the following development direction:

- Emphasis on mixed-use developments, diversity of commercial uses, infill development and increased intensity of uses along Fort Road;
- Clear architectural controls implemented through the use of urban design guidelines and regulations for the use of materials and certain building features to ensure preservation and compatibility of building styles;
- An integrated and continuous open space system;
- Emphasis on the reinforcement of the pedestrian environment and character of the area and the development of a pedestrian priority core; and
- A comprehensive circulation system for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Urban Design Guidelines**

Urban design guidelines will apply to all development covered by the Direct Control 1 zone to ensure new and existing development is compatible with the area's development concept and to ensure high quality, pedestrian-oriented development occurs.

These design guidelines will be incorporated into the Belvedere Station ARP and will relate to the policies aimed at fostering human scale, pedestrian-oriented development.

The primary aim of the guidelines will be to build on existing policy by providing planners, developers, architects, property owners and community members with a vision for the redevelopment of the area. The guidelines will provide the associated tools to help ensure development is in synch with the vision.

A separate design guidelines document / brochure will also be developed, offering suggestions on how current business owners can make easy, cost effective improvements. It is envisaged that property and building owners can easily improve existing storefronts and participate in the revitalization efforts by following guidelines that will apply to new development.

### **Pedestrian Commercial Shopping Street Overlay**

It is proposed that the Pedestrian Commercial Shopping Street Overlay (PCSSO) be amended to include the area currently zoned CNC on the north side of Fort Road (see map 10). The CNC area lies within the proposed new DC1 zone and the extension of the overlay will ensure consistent application of PCSSO policy within the new DC1 zone.

It is proposed that the MCC overlay be removed from the portion of the Fort Road area that is subject to the PCSSO overlay since the provisions of the PCSSO overlay are more appropriate for the type of development intended for this area. Furthermore, this will avoid any confusion created by having two slightly conflicting overlays covering the same area.



## 5. The Implementation Process

*The following chapter details the implementation process. The proposed process is broken down into three phases, as described below. It will be carried out over a period of five years. It is proposed that implementation will be carried out using a mixture of statutory tools such as plans, policy and zoning bylaws and non-statutory mechanisms such as design competitions and guidelines, marketing, education and advocacy. As a major landowner the City will have a significant stake in the success of the project and will also retain control of the outcomes throughout the process.*

### 5.1 The Process

The implementation of the Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Master Plan will require substantial co-operation between various civic departments, including Planning and Development, Transportation and Streets, Asset Management and Public Works, Community Services and Corporate Services for the project to be successful.

This document has been prepared in order to obtain City Council's approval for the project. Upon City Council approval of this document, the new project team can prepare a more detailed master plan, amendments to the Belvedere Station ARP, amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and design guidelines for full endorsement by City Council.

The redevelopment project will be implemented over a five year period, from 2002 to 2007. The three phases to the project are:

- Phase 1: Project Approval and Start Up
- Phase 2: Preparing for Construction and Redevelopment
- Phase 3: Redevelopment of Old Town

A detailed explanation of the three phase redevelopment process is provided below.

#### **An Edmonton Precedent**

The Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Plan is similar to the plans prepared for the communities of Rosedale and Cloverdale.

In both communities the City was a major landowner (40 %) prior to redevelopment. In 1987, the City implemented infrastructure improvements for both communities as a prelude to private redevelopment.

The implementation process for Rosedale and Cloverdale included the preparation of urban design guidelines, assessment of proposals from potential developers, and the sale of City-owned land to approved developers on condition that they adhered to the new guidelines and zoning bylaws. The dispersal of public land was phased over a 3-year period.

These redevelopment efforts have resulted in significant neighbourhood improvements and community revitalization and provide evidence that such a process can be successful in the Fort Road area as well.



### 5.1.1 Phase 1: Project Approval and Start Up

To initiate the redevelopment project City Council is being requested to give their approval for the project. Council is being requested to approve this **Fort Road Old Town Master Plan** and a **five year implementation budget** through the Capital Priorities Plan.

After approval from City Council, a **special project team** will be created to manage the redevelopment project until completion. This interdisciplinary project team will consist of contract staff from the private sector and staff from the Planning and Development, Transportation and Streets and Asset Management and Public Works Departments. The project coordinator and special project team will be based out of offices in the Planning and Development Department.

The private / public sector project team will have expertise in the following areas:

- program management
- land use planning / urban design
- transportation / municipal engineering
- land development
- land acquisition and sales

Once the project team is established it will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the project. The team will undertake the following tasks in Phase 1:

#### Final Plans and Bylaws

1. prepare **amendments to the Belvedere Station ARP and the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw**. Following a statutory public hearing, Council will be asked to formally adopt the new policy and land use regulations to govern the redevelopment of Fort Road Old Town. An updated version of the Master Plan will also be submitted for approval **(co-ordinated with Planning and Development)**.

#### Land Acquisition

2. initiate **land acquisition** for the widening of Fort Road to six lanes through the Old Town **(co-ordinated with Asset Management and Public Works and Transportation and Streets)**.

#### Design of Streets, Streetscapes and Open Space

3. prepare **preliminary designs** for the expanded Fort Road, the streetscape improvements, utility upgrades, park spaces, pedestrian network and multi-use trail **(co-ordinated with Planning and Development, Transportation and Streets, Asset Management and Public Works and Community Services)**.

#### Environmental Impact

4. undertake an **environmental impact assessment** of the project to determine any environmental impacts to be mitigated **(co-ordinated with Planning and Development)**.

#### Market Research and Land Development

5. undertake a **detailed market feasibility study** to determine the market for different types of residential, commercial and mixed use development in the Old Town **(co-ordinated with Planning and Development)**.





6. develop the administrative guidelines for the **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Housing Program** whereby the first 200 housing units constructed in the redevelopment area would be eligible for a grant of \$3,500 per unit (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development**).
7. develop the criteria and administrative guidelines for developers to provide **affordable housing units** (20% of all housing units) within their residential projects (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development, Asset Management and Public Works and Community Services**).

### 5.1.2 Phase 2: Preparing for Construction and Redevelopment

Phase 2 will focus on finalizing the acquisition of land for the road widening and the related redevelopment of commercial, residential and mixed use land parcels in the area. It will involve preparing construction drawings for the roadways and streetscape amenities, initiating any necessary environmental mitigation and developing a marketing program for the redevelopment project.

During this phase, the project team will involve the local community and work closely with staff from key City departments in undertaking the following tasks:



#### Land Acquisition

1. finalize **land acquisition** for the road widening and project redevelopment (**co-ordinated with Asset Management and Public Works**).

#### Design of Streets, Streetscapes and Parks

2. complete the **construction drawings** for the new Fort Road and interior roads, laneways and utility upgrades in the project area (**co-ordinated with Transportation and Streets and Asset Management and Public Works**).
3. prepare **final designs for the streetscape amenities** in the project area (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development and Transportation and Streets**).
4. prepare **final designs for the park spaces, pedestrian network and the multi-use trail** through the project area (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development, Transportation and Streets and Community Services**).

#### Environmental Impact

5. undertake any necessary **environmental mitigation** based on the results of the environmental impact assessment (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development**).

#### Market Research and Land Development

6. develop a **land management and redevelopment process\*** with policy and criteria for the disposal and redevelopment of City owned properties (**co-ordinated with Asset Management and Public Works and Planning and Development**).
7. develop a **marketing program** to direct the disposition of the City-owned land (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development and Asset Management and Public Works**).



## The Land Management and Redevelopment Process

As the City of Edmonton is a significant landowner in the Fort Road area, a major component of the redevelopment process will be the consolidation of developable sites and the disposal of this land on the private market. The project team will consolidate properties within the redevelopment zone and prepare land parcels to be sold.

The land will be sold through a competitive public offering process. The sale and development agreements will address the design objectives as set out in the Master Plan, Urban Design Guidelines and Zoning Bylaw. The application of performance fees and buy-back options may be required for certain sites.

The City will request development proposals from private developers through an extensive marketing program. The local community will be invited to participate in the development proposal selection process.

The objective of this land management process is to ensure high quality design and development that meets both the needs of the community and the long-term goals of the city.

### 5.1.3 Phase 3: Redevelopment of Old Town



During the third phase, the widened Fort Road will be constructed through the Old Town, streetscape improvements/amenities will be constructed throughout the redevelopment area, design competitions will be held for redevelopment sites in the area and construction of residential, commercial and mixed use developments will commence.

The project team will continue to work closely with the community and with City departments during this final implementation phase. The team will undertake the following tasks:

#### Construction of Streets, Streetscapes and Open Spaces

1. construct the **new Fort Road roadway** including municipal utilities upgrading, burial of overhead wiring and streetscape amenity improvements such as installation of decorative lighting, pedestrian seating, tree planting and landscaping improvements (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development, Transportation and Streets and Asset Management and Public Works**).
2. construct the **new roadway system in the residential / mixed use redevelopment area** to the east of Fort Road; the roadway system construction will also involve the construction of new sidewalks, decorative lighting, tree planting and landscaping improvements (**co-ordinated with Transportation and Streets and Asset Management and Public Works**).
3. construct **parks, pedestrian network connections and the multi-use trail system in the Old Town**; the pedestrian network consists of a variety of sidewalks, footpaths, laneways and open spaces (**co-ordinated with Transportation and Streets and Community Services**).



**Market Research and Land Development**

4. undertake a **marketing program** to attract high quality Transit Oriented Development projects, prospective residents and business enterprises to the Old Town redevelopment area (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development**).
5. sell **residential, commercial and mixed use redevelopment sites** through a competitive public offering process, ensuring development proposals meet community approval and the redevelopment criteria and urban design guidelines established for the area; administer the delivery of financial incentives, affordable housing requirements and other conditions / inducements (**co-ordinated with Asset Management and Public Works and Planning and Development**).
6. work with the Belvedere Community League and Fort Road Business Association in conducting **community development initiatives** to welcome new residents and business operators to the new Fort Road Old Town urban village (**co-ordinated with Planning and Development and Community Services**).

**5.1.4 Phasing and Timing Summary**

The table below outlines the proposed timing associated with each phase of the redevelopment. It also identifies which primary City departments will be involved with co-ordinating each phase.

**Key to City Departments**

- P&D Planning and Development
- AM Asset Management and Public Works
- T&S Transportation and Streets
- CS Community Services

Table 4: Phasing and Timing Summary

Fort Road Old Town Redevelopment Plan - Phasing & Timing Summary					2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007			
Project Year	Coordinated with				3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Yearly Quarter	P&D	T&S	AM	CS														
<b>Phase 1: Project Approval and Start Up</b>																		
Council Approval In Principle	✓				●	●												
Create Special Project Team	✓				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Belvedere ARP and Edmonton Zoning Bylaw Amendments	✓				●	●	●	●	●	●								
Initiate Land Acquisition and Business Assist Program		✓	✓				●	●	●	●								
Preliminary Design, Road, Streetscapes, Utilities, Parks	✓	✓	✓	✓			●	●	●	●								
Environmental Impact Assessment	✓						●	●	●	●								
Market Feasibility Study and Incentive Program	✓						●	●	●	●								
Transit Orientated Development Program	✓						●	●	●	●								
Affordable Housing Guidelines	✓		✓	✓			●	●	●	●								
<b>Phase 2: Preparation for Construction and Redevelopment</b>																		
Finalize Land Acquisition and Business Assistance			✓						●	●								
Finalize Roadway Design and Construction Drawings		✓	✓						●	●								
Finalize Streetscape Amenity Design	✓	✓							●	●								
Finalize Park space, Pedestrian Network, and Multi-Use Trail Design	✓			✓					●	●								
Undertake Environmental Mitigation	✓	✓						●	●	●								
Develop Land Management and Redevelopment Process	✓		✓					●	●	●								
Develop Marketing Program	✓		✓					●	●	●								
<b>Phase 3: Redevelopment of Old Town</b>																		
Fort Road Roadway and Streetscape Amenity Construction	✓	✓	✓							●	●	●	●					
Redevelopment Area Roadway Construction		✓	✓							●	●	●	●					
Parkspace, Pedestrian Network, and Multi-Use Trail Construction		✓		✓						●	●	●	●					
Undertake Marketing Program	✓									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sale of Residential, Commercial, Mixed Use Development Sites	✓		✓								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Community Development Initiatives	✓			✓							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



## 6 Project Costs and Benefits

*This chapter describes the costs and benefits associated with the proposed redevelopment. These have been established through a cost benefit analysis. Initially, the cost benefit analysis methodology, including a quantitative and qualitative assessment, is briefly described. The results of the quantitative analysis including a breakdown of the overall Old Town redevelopment and transportation related costs is then outlined, clearly distinguishing these costs and benefits. The final section includes a discussion on the identified qualitative benefits of the proposed redevelopment.*

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### 6.1 Cost Benefit Analysis

In order to assess the economic feasibility of the Fort Road Old Town redevelopment concept and justify the proposed plan, the Planning and Development Department has undertaken a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed design concept.

The consulting firm, Strategy Studio Inc, which specializes in market studies, feasibility analysis and land development, was commissioned by the City to carry out this analysis.

The analysis of the Fort Road Old Town redevelopment project was both qualitative and quantitative. It focused on the roadway construction, land acquisition, land sales, streetscape and park improvements, and the commercial and residential land development components of the redevelopment plan. Potential costs associated with factors such as utility requirements, environmental mitigation, legal negotiations, marketing, and development tendering were also identified.

The analysis also outlined predicted benefits to be experienced due to City land sales, land appreciation, community revitalization, long-term tax base increases, cost savings and environmental benefits from land intensification as an alternative to urban sprawl, and other factors.

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### 6.2 Quantitative Analysis

A quantitative analysis examines the costs associated with a project that can be quantified. These include numerical, measurable characteristics such as land development costs, improvement costs and predicted increases in land value.

The quantitative costs of the Fort Road Old Town redevelopment project can be broken down into two parts. These include:

- the **Fort Road Old Town land redevelopment cost components** associated with the Old Town redevelopment area as identified in this Master Plan; and
- the **transportation cost components** related to widening Fort Road by two lanes through the Old Town (in association with the long term plans to widen Fort Road from Yellowhead Trail to 137 Avenue).

Since the widening of Fort Road in the Old Town is related to a long term city-wide transportation need, its costs have been separated out from the costs of the Old Town redevelopment project.





While the land development and transportation components have been separated out, they are interdependent components and would proceed in tandem upon approval of the redevelopment project.

A detailed explanation of the land development costs and benefits is presented below, followed by an explanation of the transportation costs. As shown in these sections the projected net cost of the Old Town land development component of the project is estimated to be \$503,500.

Over a five year period following the implementation of the project, it is estimated the project will generate significant financial benefits to the City, including \$4,950,000 in property taxes, \$337,500 in business taxes and \$1,500,000 in additional LRT revenue. The total of revenues flowing to the City from the land development project over a five year period will be \$6,787,500.

The overall cost of the transportation component, including the widening of Fort Road through the Old Town, a new LRT park and ride lot and construction of a section of the city-wide multi-use trail, is estimated to be \$12,025,000.

## 6.3 Old Town Land Redevelopment Costs and Benefits

The quantitative analysis was based on the estimated development potential of residential, commercial and mixed use residential/commercial sites in the redevelopment area. It examined the impact the **'place making dividend'**<sup>1</sup> would have on market sales of residential condominiums and lease rates of commercial space. Inputs were based on market indicators and typical building development costs. It must be noted that at this stage there are no site specific building plans and therefore both costs and potential revenues are averages for typical development.

### Land Redevelopment Costs

The **Fort Road Old Town redevelopment cost components** include the following:

- **land acquisition** costs for lands in excess of roadway requirements;
- **land development costs** in the redevelopment area including interior street construction, servicing, park development and streetscape improvements;
- **Transit-Oriented Development Housing Program costs**; and
- **design and consulting costs** for special expertise and services related to the project team implementation work.

### Land Redevelopment Benefits

There are two categories of financial benefits that will result from the implementation of the redevelopment project:

- direct, short term financial benefits; and
- ongoing, long term financial benefits.

The first category of financial benefit - direct, short term benefits - includes the land sales revenue from selling City owned land in the redevelopment area.

The second category of financial benefit resulting from the project - ongoing, long term benefits – includes:

- the increase in **annual property tax revenue** realized from new development;
- the increase in **revenue from increased LRT ridership**; and
- **infrastructure savings** resulting from building high density development in the inner city.

<sup>1</sup> A place-making dividend refers to “the intrinsic value that accrues to a community when districts possess a strong sense of place that in turn results in high levels of repeat visits, increasing rents, retail, sales, leasing demand and capital value”. *Source: Ten Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Business Districts, Booth et al.*



### 6.3.1 Short Term Land Development Costs and Benefits

Land and development costs have been established through consulting existing land records and estimating current development costs. The estimated future residential and commercial revenue calculations are based on the assumption that the 'place making dividend' resulting from the implementation of the Master Plan will result in a significant improvement in the economics of the residential and commercial development. Revenue calculations from land sales are therefore based on the average market price that residential and commercial land in the area may potentially achieve. The estimated revenue is \$5,250 per residential dwelling unit, and \$9.00 per square foot for commercial space in the area.

Findings of the quantitative analysis confirmed that there is potential for the development of 1,000 residential units in the area. Approximately 750 of these can be developed in the high-density residential development area and 250 within the commercial area fronting the east side of Fort Road.

With an estimated total of 1,000 units in the redevelopment area, at an average of \$5,250 per unit, the potential revenue from the sale of land would total \$5,250,000. The City of Edmonton lands available for resale would accommodate approximately 685 units and have a sales potential of approximately \$3,596,250.

Findings also confirmed the potential for a gross area of approximately 84,000 square feet of grade level retail commercial development along Fort Road. This translates to a net area of approximately 68,000 square feet of rental commercial space along Fort Road. The estimated sales potential for the commercial properties along Fort Road, once improvements are made in the area, is \$875,250.

Table 5 summarizes the short term project costs and benefits directly associated with the Old Town redevelopment area.

*Table 5: Old Town Redevelopment - Estimated Costs and Revenues*

<b>Redevelopment Component</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>
Land Acquisition-Lands in excess of roadway requirements	\$775,000
Road Construction (interior streets), Streetscape Improvements (Fort Road and interior streets), Servicing, Park Development, Design and Consulting Contracts	\$3,000,000
Transit-Oriented Development Housing Grant*	\$ 500,000
	\$700,000
<b>TOTAL Project Cost</b>	<b>\$4,975,000</b>
<b>Redevelopment Component</b>	<b>Revenue Estimate</b>
Sale of City's Excess Lands	
Fort Road Frontage (Commercial)	\$875,250
East of Fort Road (Residential)	\$3,596,250
<b>TOTAL Project Revenues</b>	<b>\$4,471,500</b>
<b>NET COST OF PROJECT</b>	<b>\$503,500</b>

\* see section 6.3.4 for an explanation of the Transit-Oriented Development Housing Program.



In summary, the analysis indicates the Fort Road Old Town Master Plan has the potential through creation of a 'place making dividend' to achieve a total of \$4,471,500 in the resale of City owned lands. Since the total short term costs of the land development components are estimated to be \$4,975,000, the net cost of the redevelopment project is estimated to be \$503,500.

### 6.3.2 Long Term Land Development Benefits – Tax Revenues

There are a number of long term financial benefits from the redevelopment project as mentioned above. The most significant financial benefit results from the increased tax revenue from the new residential and commercial development. The sections below explain the increases that will occur in the area's assessable tax base and the increased annual tax revenue resulting from the redevelopment project.

#### Current and Potential Assessed Value of Land

The current assessed value of land in the redevelopment area is \$4,470,500. It is estimated that it will take 5 – 7 years for the area to be fully built out, with residential and commercial redevelopment scheduled to commence in 2005. The cost-benefit analysis estimates that upon completion the potential assessed value of the area (2002\$) would be in the range of \$111 million.

Table 6 sets out the total assessed value of land in the Old Town redevelopment area before and after development.

Table 6: Current and Potential Future Assessed Value of Land

	Current Assessed Value of Land	Potential Future Assessed Value	Potential Increase in Assessed Value
<b>TOTAL Value of Redevelopment Area</b>	\$4,470,500	\$111,000,000	<b>\$106,529,500</b>

Assuming the lower assessed value of \$111 million and given the current assessed value of land in the area of \$4,470,500 (\$2002), this results in an increase of more than **\$106 million** in the assessed value of the land in the area over the period.

#### Current and Potential Annual Property and Business Tax Revenues

The current annual municipal property tax revenue realized from the properties in the redevelopment area is approximately \$50,000. The predicted future tax revenue is based on the development of 1,000 residential units and a gross land area of 97,250 square feet of commercial space at current average unit market value assessment and 2002 municipal mill rates.

It is estimated that upon completion, the annual municipal property tax revenue to be realized from the redevelopment area would be \$990,000. Therefore, the increase in property tax revenues resulting from the Old Town redevelopment project is estimated to be approximately \$940,000 per annum.

Table 7 sets out the existing and potential future annual property tax revenue for the Old Town redevelopment area.



Table 7: Current and Potential Future Annual Property Tax Revenue

Municipal Property Tax	Current Annual Taxes	Potential Future Annual Taxes	Potential Annual Tax Revenue increase
Residential (future development of 1000 units)		\$860,000	\$860,000
Commercial (future development of 97,250 square feet of land)	\$50,000	\$130,000	\$80,000
<b>TOTAL Annual Municipal Property Tax</b>	\$50,000	\$990,000	<b>\$940,000</b>

The additional business tax revenue generated from the redevelopment of the Old Town (an additional 68,000 square feet of retail commercial) is estimated to be \$67,500 per annum.

Based on the above calculations, over a period of 5 years from the completion of the redevelopment project, the area would generate a total of **\$4,950,000** in property tax revenues and \$337,500 in business taxes for the City, for a 5 year total of \$5,287,500.

These figures do not account for the expected increase in tax revenues resulting from other redevelopment in the area, such as the west side of the Fort road commercial strip in the Old Town.

### 6.3.3 Other Long Term Benefits

As mentioned earlier, in addition to increased property tax revenues, there will be a number of direct and indirect financial benefits realized through this redevelopment project. Some of these other long term benefits are:

- increased transit ridership as a result of at least 1,500 new residents living in a TOD community within close walking distance of the Belvedere LRT station, resulting in an estimated \$301,000 in additional LRT revenue per year;
- infrastructure cost savings resulting from maximizing the development potential of an established area;
- infrastructure cost savings resulting from the “catalyst effect”, whereby the redevelopment of the Old Town will foster additional redevelopment in the general area, immediately north along Fort Road, south along Fort Road and to the east in the Kennedale Industrial Area; and
- infrastructure cost savings as a result of potential City policy direction (resulting from this demonstration project) to create high density TOD communities at the other three existing at-grade LRT stations and future LRT stations in other sectors of the city.

The first of these financial benefits stems from the redevelopment project being a demonstration project for Transit-Oriented Development and the latter three financial benefits are a consequence of the project being a demonstration project for Smart Growth, otherwise known as an Edmonton Smart Choice.

The above financial benefits have not all been calculated as yet but it is estimated that over the long term, together they would be significant, amounting to several millions of dollars.

### 6.3.4 Transit-Oriented Development Housing Program

The analysis of residential potential, assuming average to good quality multi-family development indicated that there would be significant long term economic benefits from implementing the proposed Master Plan. However, in the short term development will require a



strong City commitment by way of implementing quality physical improvements and by establishing a financial incentive housing program similar to that used to stimulate housing development in Downtown Edmonton.

The cost benefit analysis indicated that in the first two years of development, prior to the “place-making dividend” being fully realized, a developer would likely lose \$3,500 per residential dwelling unit.

Even though the proposed physical improvements will make a big difference in improving the image of the area, the present deteriorated state of the Old Town area and environs is still considered to be quite a strong deterrent to attracting developers to the area. Based on this, the cost benefit analysis suggested that a development subsidy or incentive program would be required in the first two years or early stages of residential development. It is proposed that the Planning and Development Department develop such a housing incentive program whereby the first 200 housing units constructed in the redevelopment area would be eligible for a grant of \$3,500 per unit.

It is suggested that the establishment of this financial incentive program will pay dividends for the City in the end as it will firmly establish the area as a “special development area” and help kick start development. The faster pace of development will result in quicker sales of City owned lands and subsequent financial benefits.

## 6.4 Old Town Transportation Costs and Benefits

The **transportation cost components** related to the redevelopment project include the following:

- the widening of Fort Road by 2 lanes including land acquisition;
- the relocation of the Park and Ride parking lot located on the corner of 62 Street and 129 Avenue (not required until 2009); and
- the development of a four block portion of the city-wide multi-use trail system.

Costs associated with the transportation components of this project are summarized in Table 8, as follows:

*Table 8: Estimated Fort Road Old Town Related Transportation Costs*

Fort Road Transportation Project Component	Estimated Cost
Fort Road Widening	\$5,225,000
Multi-Use Trail	\$ 800,000
Belvedere LRT Park n Ride parking lot	\$6,000,000
<b>TOTAL Transportation Related Costs</b>	<b>\$12,025,000</b>

The main financial benefit of proceeding with the Fort Road widening option is that it is the least costly roadway option. The one way couplet option is estimated to cost \$2.4 million while the widening option is estimated to cost \$2 million. The additional cost attributed to the one way couplet option is primarily due to the fact that this option would require two additional intersections to be built at 66 Street and at 129 Avenue.



## 6.5 Qualitative Analysis

A qualitative cost benefit analysis considers the qualities of the redevelopment that cannot be measured in quantitative terms but nevertheless are very important in terms of the economic feasibility of a project.

The qualitative analysis carried out by Strategy Studio Inc referred to Booth et al “Ten Principles for Reinventing America’s Suburban Business Districts” published by the Urban Land Institute. Application of the ‘Ten Principles’ during the strategic planning and development stages has been found to maximize the place-making dividend, as defined in section 6.3 of this report.

An assessment based on the Ten Principles noted below indicated that “there exists the potential to create a unique retail district for northeast Edmonton which is street oriented. It will complement existing auto oriented retail, strip and regional mall retail, and big box retail of the area. Although it will overlap trade areas, the unique character created by the Master Plan would satisfy demand for a different shopping, business and residential experience”.

### **Ten Principles or Qualitative Assessment Criteria**

1. Understand your position in the market
2. Build community support
3. Develop a vision and a plan
4. Stress results over regulation
5. Break up the superblocks and optimize connectivity
6. Embrace mixed use
7. Honor the human scale by creating a pedestrian friendly place
8. Think transit - think density
9. Create a public/private partnership
10. Share and manage parking

The results of the qualitative analysis also indicated the following with respect to the Old Town redevelopment:

- There appears to be adequate community support for change.
- The Master Plan will create a vision for the place that private and public participants can work toward. The uncertainty that has prevailed over the past decade will be addressed.
- It is suggested that a flexible approach to development be implemented that stresses results.
- The proposed Master Plan is based on small blocks which optimize connectivity for both automobile and pedestrian traffic.
- The proposed Master Plan incorporates/envision a mix including retail, office and residential uses. Such a mix has the potential to create an area that appears vibrant and



active and be perceived to increase personal safety and less likely to experience high crime rates.

- The Master Plan honours the human scale and is pedestrian friendly.
- The area is well serviced by the Belvedere LRT Station. The plan provides opportunity to accommodate significant residential and commercial office densities.
- It is suggested that some form of public/private partnership be developed in order to facilitate initial re-development. At this time it is premature to indicate the form such a partnership should take. It will be necessary to identify the development constraints and program accordingly. The extent of such a partnership could be modest. For example, the widening of Fort Road will result in the City becoming a major land owner in the area. This represents a significant opportunity to assemble key fragmented block ownership into development units of an attractive scale. Even if there is no further involvement by the City the assembly of land for sale to private development interests would be a significant positive contribution to the successful redevelopment of the area.
- Although it is not likely to be necessary until significant re-development has occurred it is suggested that consideration be given to creative solutions to share and manage parking to the benefit of the area. This will result in a higher density around the LRT station and promote use of a significant public investment.
- Based on the qualitative assessment to date the widening of Fort Road as proposed in the Master Plan has significantly more potential to create a node of mixed density in the vicinity of the Belvedere LRT station (as opposed to the one way couplet option). The one-way couplet alternative would likely result in an area of low auto oriented density which could take little advantage of the Belvedere LRT Station.
- The Old Town area of Fort Road has the potential to become a unique retail district within the context of existing Northeast area retail. There is medium and long term potential to achieve a significant place-making dividend and for a successful redevelopment project to occur.



## 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposed redevelopment as outlined in this Master Plan is important to the City of Edmonton and Northeast Edmonton for a number of reasons.

The project addresses the much needed revitalization of a historic part of Northeast Edmonton. As a demonstration project the proposed development embraces the principles of Transit Orientated Development and Smart Growth which can also be applied to development in other parts of the city.

As discussed earlier the proposed project will also accomplish the following objectives in the Northeast Edmonton area:

- Establish a land use pattern which favours ridership of the LRT;
- Provide higher densities close to the LRT station;
- Change land uses from industrial to residential and commercial;
- Combine retail, office and residential uses in projects;
- Establish a pedestrian zone within a 5 minute walking distance of the LRT station;
- Develop a strong pedestrian network integrating public and private properties; and
- Develop City-owned land as mixed use demonstration projects.

In addition to these benefits the quantitative analysis demonstrated a number of both short and long term financial benefits from the proposed development and the qualitative analysis was also in support.

Such benefits identified in the quantitative analysis included:

- A relatively minimal predicted short term redevelopment cost of \$503,500;
- Long term increase in land value in excess of \$106 million;
- Potential long-term annual tax revenue increase of more than \$1 million per year;
- Increased LRT ridership and an increase of \$301,000 in annual LRT revenue from 1,500 new residents living in the TOD community;
- Infrastructure cost savings from maximizing the development potential of an established area; and
- Infrastructure cost savings from the 'catalyst' effect whereby the proposed development will foster other nearby development and TOD and Smart Growth development in other parts of the city.

Benefits identified in the qualitative analysis found:

- There appears to be adequate community support for change;
- The Master Plan will create a vision for the place that private and public participants can work toward. The uncertainty that has prevailed over the past decade will be addressed;
- The proposed Master Plan incorporates/envision a mix including retail, office and residential uses. Such a mix has the potential to create an area that appears vibrant and active and be perceived to increase personal safety and less likely to experience high crime rates.





Based on the above justification, the following is recommended:

1. That City Council approve the Fort Road Old Town Master Plan.
2. That City Council approve the following activities to initiate the implementation of the Fort Road Old Town Master Plan:
  - The preparation of amendments to the Belvedere Station Area Redevelopment Plan and the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw.
  - Preparation of administrative guidelines for a Transit-Oriented Development Housing Program.
3. That a further report detailing the implementation model, including the project structure, timeline and total costs / benefits be developed for Council consideration for the 2003 budget.

As a model to achieve the goals of Plan Edmonton, the Transportation Master Plan and the Belvedere ARP it is evident that the proposed development will have many positive short and long term benefits for the Fort Road and surrounding Northeast Edmonton communities, and for the Edmonton region as a whole.