



# YELLOWHEAD TRAIL STRATEGIC PLAN

OCTOBER 2013

## About the Project

The Yellowhead Trail Strategic Plan aims to transition Yellowhead Trail into a freeway, with access to and from the corridor to the surrounding roadway network concentrated at key locations.

This change is a key component of the City's Transportation Master Plan, *The Way We Move*. Over the next 30 years, full implementation of the plan will provide for better management of projected traffic volume increases and will improve safety at several high-collision locations.

The Yellowhead Trail Strategic Plan was endorsed by City Council in November 2011, and the Transportation Systems Bylaw was amended in late 2011 to designate Yellowhead Trail as a future freeway.

## Project Scope and Budget

Implementation of Yellowhead Trail Strategic Plan will require significant planning, technical analysis and public involvement and will therefore take place over the course of many years. It is organized into several stages that concentrate on key sections of the route. 2013 budget numbers are the latest estimates but subject to change with further refinements to the design plans.

### Stage 1

- 89 Street Intersection Closure (Concept Plan Complete) - \$5 Million
- 66 Street Access Management (Concept Plan Complete) - \$21 Million

Costs include road network improvements required to accommodate the re-routed traffic and large trucks, plus closure construction costs.

### Stage 2

- 149 Street Plan - \$215 Million includes construction and land acquisition costs



This concept plan calls for no interchange and improvements to one-way service roads paralleling Yellowhead Trail on the north and south sides.

### Stage 3

- Construction of an interchange at 127 Street - \$235 Million - includes construction and land acquisition costs
- Modifications to the St. Albert Trail interchange
- Closure of direct-access to Yellowhead Trail from 130 Street, 126 Street, and 124 Street
- Creating alternative access to surrounding properties

Any access road closures would be considered in conjunction with planning for an interchange at 127 Street. Concept Planning for Stage 3 and 4 will likely be completed as one project as they are closely tied together.

Stage 4 - cost unknown at this time, pending concept planning

- Construction of an interchange at 121 Street
- Closure of direct access at 107 Street
- Creating alternative access to surrounding properties



The construction of an interchange at this location will benefit the City Centre Redevelopment lands. Timing of this project would be evaluated as development of the airport lands advances.

**Stage 5** - cost unknown at this time, pending concept planning

- Modifications to the existing interchange at Fort Road/Wayne Gretzky Drive Closure of the 66 Street intersection
- Removal of traffic signals at 66 Street
- Alternate access to surrounding properties
- Construction of a new road connecting 66 Street to Fort Road

The closure of 66 Street will remove the final at-grade signalized intersection on the Yellowhead Trail corridor, bringing it up to a fully free-flowing standard. However, before any major changes are made to the Yellowhead Trail / 66 Street intersection, upgrades to the Fort Road interchange should be completed to prepare for anticipated changes in travel pattern.

## Project Status

Public involvement and concept planning for Yellowhead Trail at 149 Street is in the final stages of development. Following the September 2013 open house and further technical refinements to the preferred option, the project team will present the final concept plan to Transportation Committee for approval in early 2014.

The next stage of concept planning for the Yellowhead Strategic Plan is currently under review.

Neither the Stage 1 improvements nor the changes to the Yellowhead Trail at 149 Street have received budget approval, therefore there is no timeline for construction of these projects.

## Background

Yellowhead Trail is identified in the City's Transportation Master Plan as a key segment of the Inner Ring Road.

As a major commuter route, a designated 24-hour Truck Route and a Dangerous Goods Route, Yellowhead Trail sees significant traffic which is projected to increase to more than 110,000 cars and 20,000 trucks per day over the next 30 years.

In addition, the City's 2012 Truck Study showed that traffic flow along the Yellowhead Trail is a major challenge for trucks travelling between the City's northwest and southeast industrial parks, impeding the efficient flow of goods movement across the city and to the Capital Region. As a result, the City's draft Goods Movement Strategy recommends the implementation of the Yellowhead Trail Strategic Plan.



## Benefits of a Freeway

Edmonton plays an important role in Alberta's economy and has undergone significant growth over the past decade. A key element to the city's prosperity is the safe, efficient and effective goods movement in order to support economic development and business competitiveness. The benefits of converting the Yellowhead into a freeway include:

- Uninterrupted travel in eastbound and westbound directions, reducing travel delays and congestion
- Reduction of collision rates
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved fuel efficiency
- Improved goods and services movement