

## Welcome to planWhyte Public Workshop #1

The City is initiating a land use study for the Whyte Avenue Commercial Area portion of the Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP). Tonight's workshop has been designed to inform you about the study process, provide further context and overview of the study area, and collect public stakeholder input at this early stage of the process.



Study Area Boundary

### About the Plan

#### Background

Edmonton continues to grow and evolve presenting both new opportunities and challenges for accommodating change. The Strathcona neighbourhood is a key area where change needs to be carefully managed and leveraged to sustain its future prosperity, attractiveness and livability. While celebrated and valued for its unique commercial and historic character, Strathcona continues to experience increased interest and pressure to redevelop within/around its core heritage commercial area. In 2015 Administration undertook a series of activities to determine the effectiveness of the existing Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP). This included meetings with key stakeholders, focus groups, an online survey and review of case studies. Initial findings indicated that the Strathcona ARP provides for strong heritage preservation but constrains new more intensive redevelopment opportunities. In consideration of recent development pressure and sensitivity of the area's heritage and character, City Council Executive Committee on February 2, 2016, supported Administration's proposal to undertake a focused land use study.

#### What will the study do?

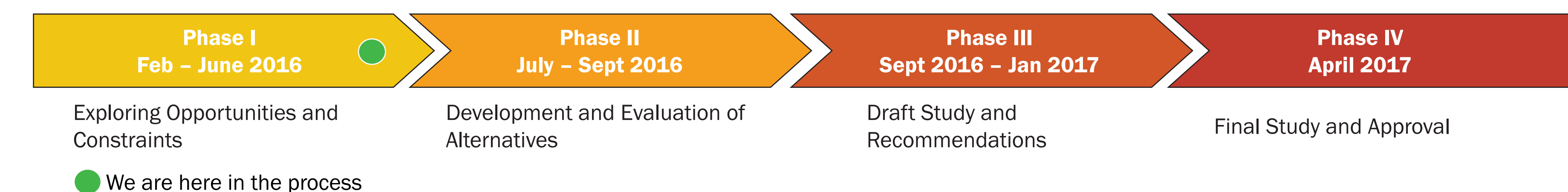
This study will examine heritage, land use, urban design, transportation, and development opportunities (outside the core heritage commercial area), in order to develop a design vision for the long-term evolution of Whyte Avenue. The study is expected to lead to a series of recommendations that will:

- Strengthen preservation of the core heritage commercial area
- Identify potential opportunities for additional development outside the core area
- Enhance the quality of urban design within the Whyte Avenue corridor area
- Lead to amendments to the Strathcona ARP

#### Who is preparing the study?

The City is leading preparation of the land use study in consultation with the community and stakeholders. External consultants will provide additional technical expertise, support and recommendations as necessary.

#### What is the study process and timelines?



#### What opportunities for public and stakeholder input will be provided?

The study process includes the following consultation opportunities:

- Phase I-IV - Public Stakeholder Discussions
- Phase I - Public Open House Workshop #1
- Phase II - Public Open House Workshop #2
- Phase III - Public Meeting
- Phase IV - City Planning Committee Meeting

For more information please visit the project website at [edmonton.ca/planwhyte](http://edmonton.ca/planwhyte) or contact Michael Strong, Senior Planner, at 780-496-1909 or [planwhyte@edmonton.ca](mailto:planwhyte@edmonton.ca).

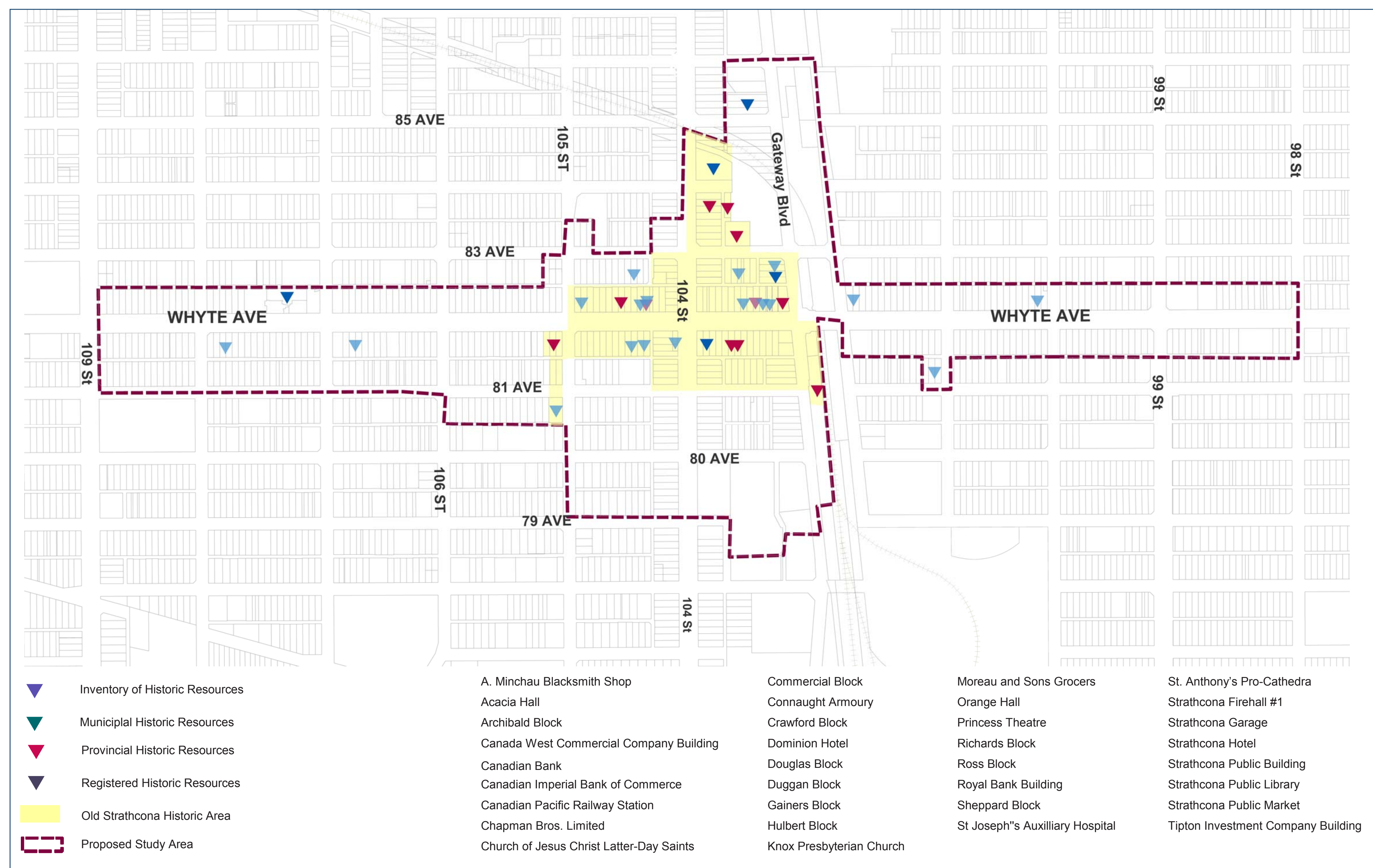
### Tonight's Agenda

- 6:00 – 6:30** Registration, meet the project team, and informal tour of display panels
- 6:30 – 7:00** Presentation
- 7:00 – 8:00** Table breakout group discussions
- 8:00 – 8:30** Groups report back
- 8:30** Wrap up and next steps



## Whyte Avenue Commercial Area

The first step in considering the future of the Whyte Avenue corridor is to understand its context and how it works today. The following panels provide an overview of the corridor's heritage character, physical urban structure and mobility networks. The urban structure influences how people move around and use the area and helps inform an understanding the area's strengths, weaknesses, and future opportunities.



Provincial and Civic Historically Significant Buildings

### Heritage Character

The Whyte Avenue commercial area has a rich main street history, unique character and sense of place. Located in the neighbourhood of Strathcona, development first began with the arrival of the Calgary and Edmonton Railway line in 1891. Early development centred on Whyte (82) Avenue and what we now call today Old Strathcona. This area forms the core heritage commercial area within the Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan and during the early 1900s thrived as a government, cultural, commercial and transportation centre. It was not until Strathcona was amalgamated with the City of Edmonton in 1912 that local business and investment shifted north across the river helping to preserve much of the area's early railroad heritage and low scale 1890-1920s Boom-town architecture. This has contributed significantly to the area's unique history, character, and vibrancy we enjoy today.

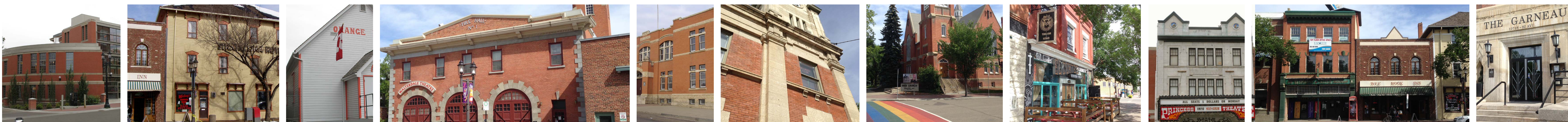


Period of Construction

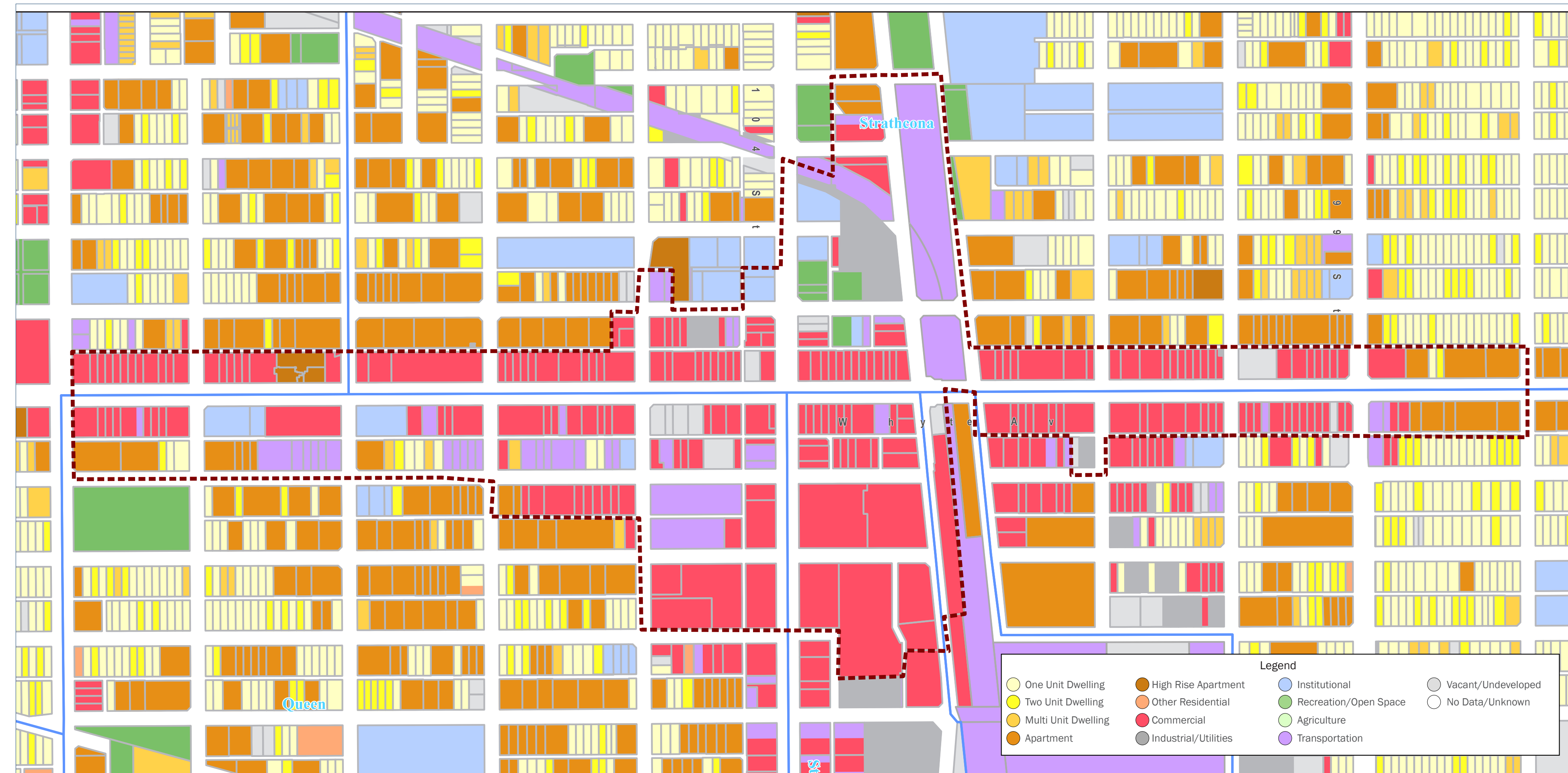
### Building age

Whyte Avenue area has undergone considerable change over time. Beginning in the mid-1970s, public and private initiatives have helped rejuvenate the area as an entertainment and commercial hub with an "old town" ambience. Recognized by the community in 1974 with the formation of the Old Strathcona Foundation, a range of actions have been taken to revitalize the area including purchase, restoration and sale of key properties in Old Strathcona's commercial core. Some of these include the Princess Theatre, Dominion Hotel and the Hulbert Block. In 1993 Edmonton's Inventory of Historic Resources further recognized the heritage nature of Old Strathcona and in 1998, City Council adopted the Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP). Key policy directions of the plan are to retain the historic character of the core commercial area, and to manage the compatibility of redevelopment surrounding this core area in part by limiting building heights to four storeys.

In 2007 the Province of Alberta designated Old Strathcona as one of only two Provincial Historic Areas. More recently, City Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Old Strathcona Foundation, the International Council of Monuments and Sites Canada and the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for Asia and the Pacific in Shanghai to cooperate on the research and promotion of a Historic Urban Landscape approach in the Old Strathcona heritage area. Today, Old Strathcona (and Whyte Avenue) remains a premiere business and tourism area serving as a major destination for Edmonton residents and visitors.





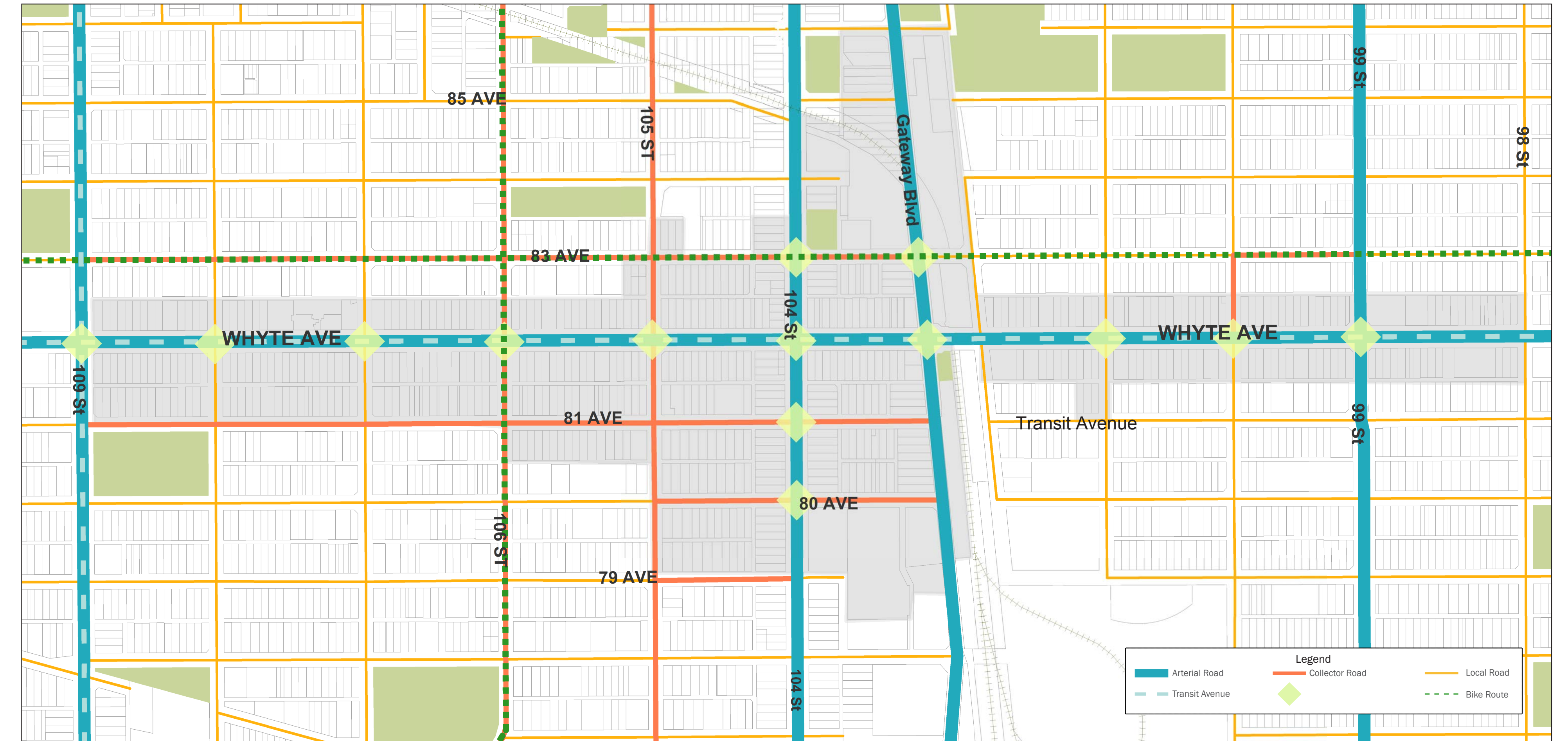
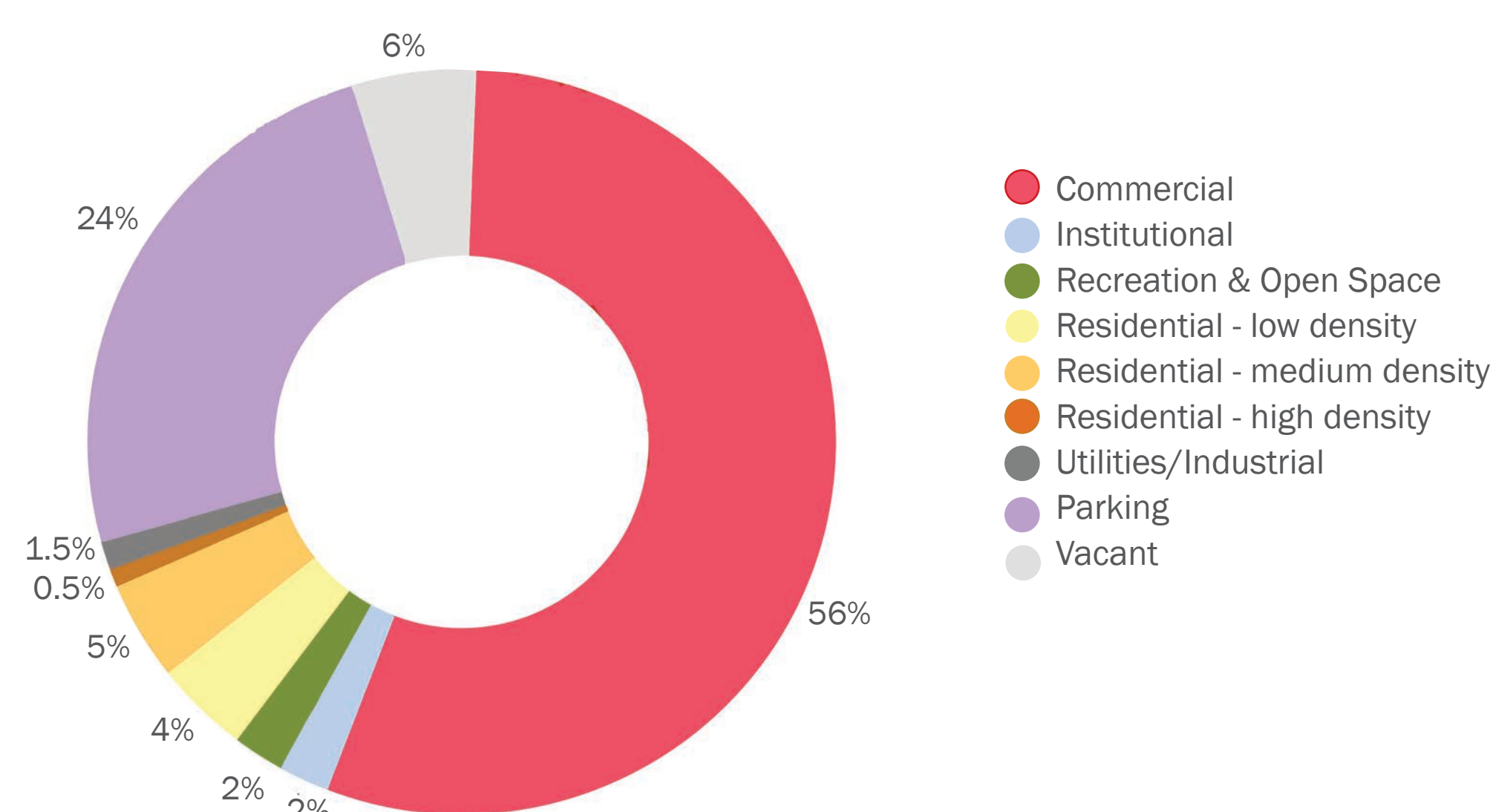


## Land Use

The study area consists of a variety of land uses including commercial, institutional, transportation, low and medium density residential. The chart below illustrates that commercial uses dominate the study area both in terms of its development pattern and function. Within the core heritage commercial area of 103 Street and 105 Street, there is a mix of 1,2 and 3 storey retail shops. These are pedestrian oriented, emphasize ground oriented retail and services and front directly onto Whyte Avenue. Outside the core heritage commercial area commercial retail is less fine grain (e.g. more space between shop entrances, larger lots) and generally 1 to 2 storeys in height. These are served by a number of surface parking lots located along the south and north side of Whyte Avenue.

Institutional uses are primarily concentrated north of the core heritage commercial area (e.g. Strathcona Library, Varscona Theatre, Farmer's Market) with the exception of two sites along Whyte Avenue at 107 Street (St. Anthony's Church) and 108 Street (The Church of Jesus Christ of Later-Day Saints). A Medium density residential in the form of low rise apartments is the primary residential form within the Whyte Avenue area. This is largely concentrated in the west and eastern portions of the study area near 109 Street and 98 Street respectively. Given the historical development pattern of Whyte Avenue as a main street, there is very little park or open space within this area with the exception of Dr. Wilbert McIntyre Park in the core area.

Land Use Concentrations

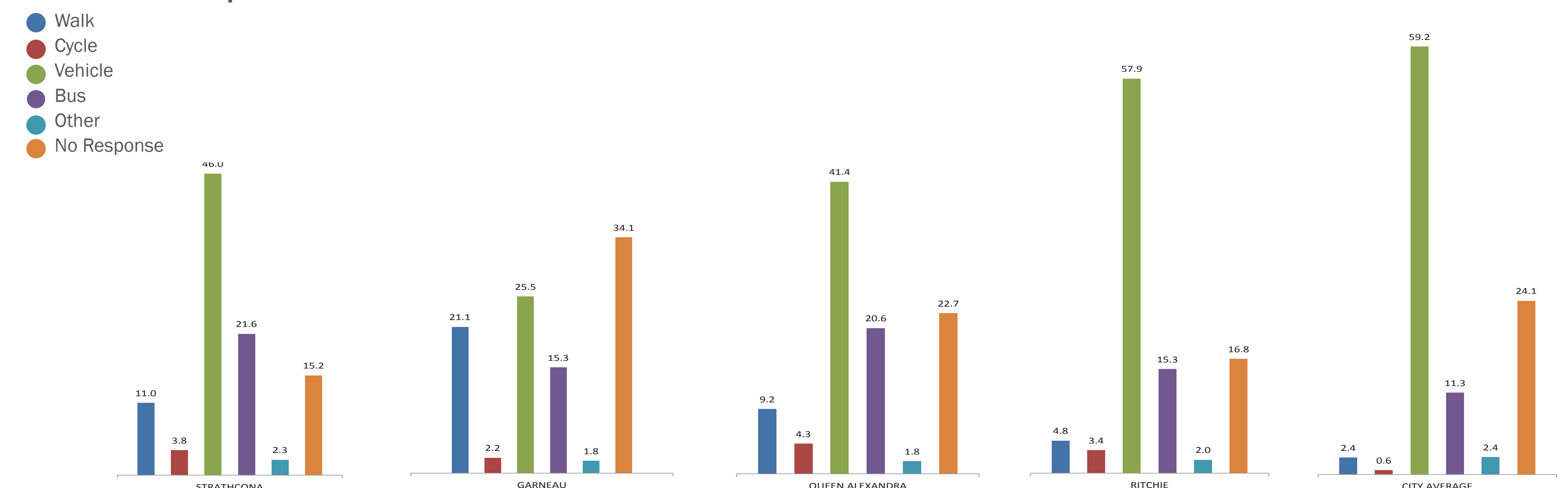


## Transportation Network

Whyte Avenue has an excellent street network defined by a consistent, rectilinear grid of streets. Smaller blocks 100mx150m in size provide pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles a high level of access and connectivity to move in, through and around the study area. Sidewalks provided along the avenue and streets are well used and average 2,300-2,900 pedestrian counts daily. On weekends, this number can significantly increase with the area's entertainment and night-time economy. Curb cuts for local business vehicle access/egress breaks up the continuity of pedestrian travel outside the core area. A major bike route along 83 Avenue will connect the Whyte Avenue area to Mill Creek Ravine in the east (via 96 Street) and Garneau, and University area in the west past 110 Street. This will be a protected bike lane physically separated from cars, parking and sidewalk with construction beginning in 2016 from 99 Street to 96 Street. An additional major bike route extending along 106 Street will provide additional access and connectivity north and south of the area.

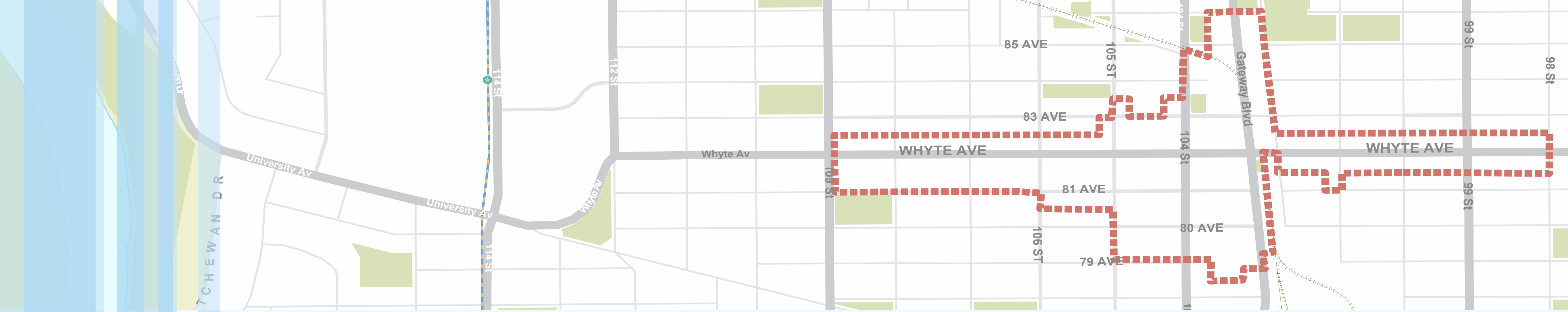
Whyte Avenue also serves as a major east-west arterial roadway and transit route providing access to major commercial, educational and employment centres in the Downtown and at the University of Alberta. Each weekday approximately 27,000 vehicles travel this roadway along with 9,100 transit riders on 5 different bus routes (4, 7, 57, 94, 327) serving communities in west and east Edmonton.

Modes of Transportation



Source: 2014 Municipal Census

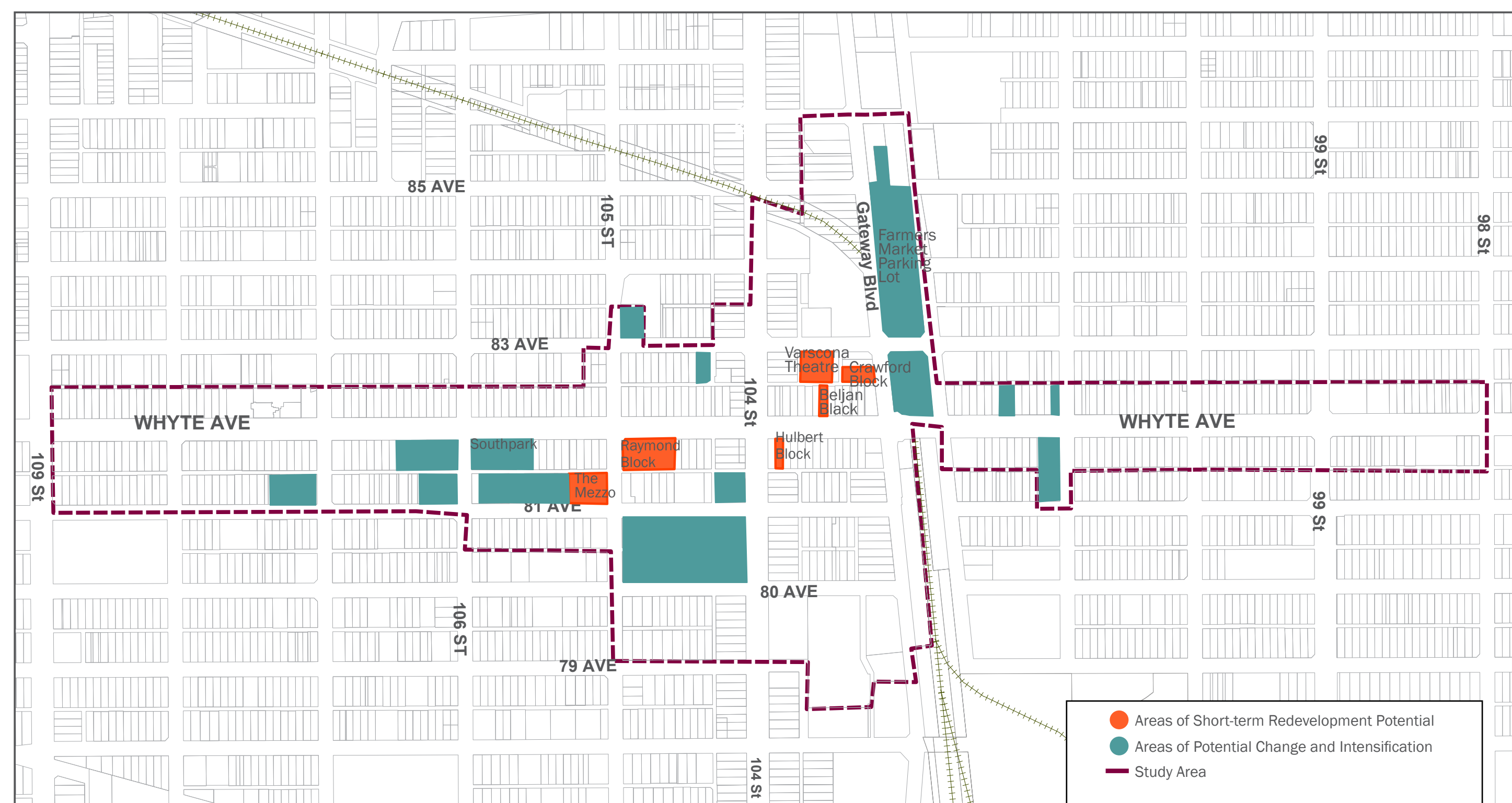




## What makes a Main Street?

Main streets flourish when they provide a variety of goods and services, a pleasant community environment and easy access. Design and physical appearance contribute directly to liveability and economic success. Main streets should be a visually stimulating area that encourages people to linger and explore.

Buildings are the primary feature of urban contexts that create a sense of definition and enclosure on a thoroughfare—an important urban design element that helps create the experience of being in a city and in a place that is comfortable for pedestrians.



### Areas of Change

The degree and location of change within the study area over the long-term will vary based on each individual site's location and use. Within and around the study area there are a number of areas with the potential to change over time indicated on the map above. These include:

- **Areas of Short-term Redevelopment Potential** – These are recent or currently approved developments in and around the study area.
- **Areas of Potential Change and Intensification** – These are areas of largely underutilized land where change or intensification is expected over time. In some cases this could include the redevelopment of existing surface parking lots, vacant lands, re-use or redevelopment of existing structures. The timing and certainty of change in these areas are unknown and impacted by factors such as market demand, land ownership, and technical constraints.



Building Form



Building Height

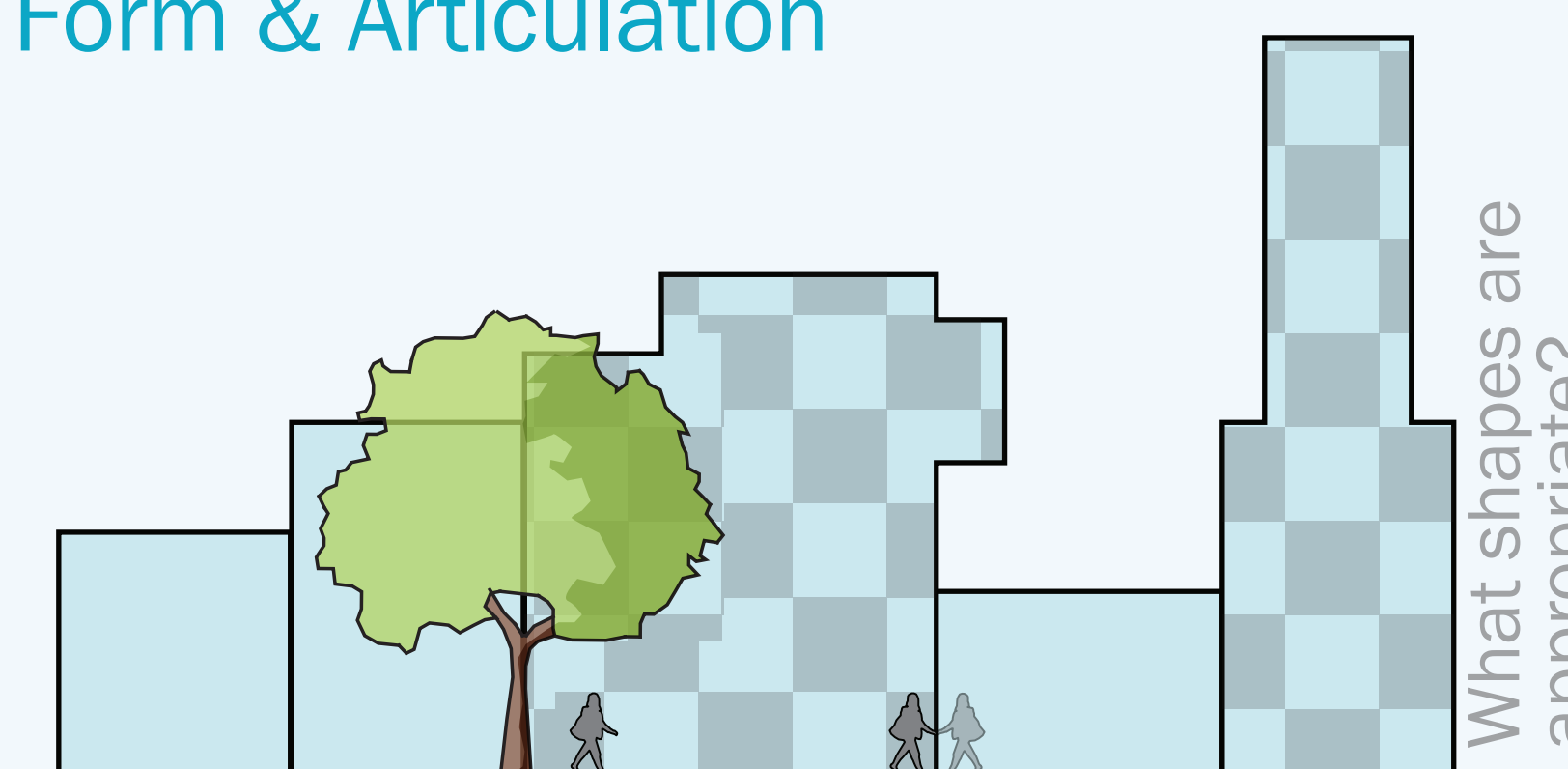


Building Width



Transition

### Form & Articulation

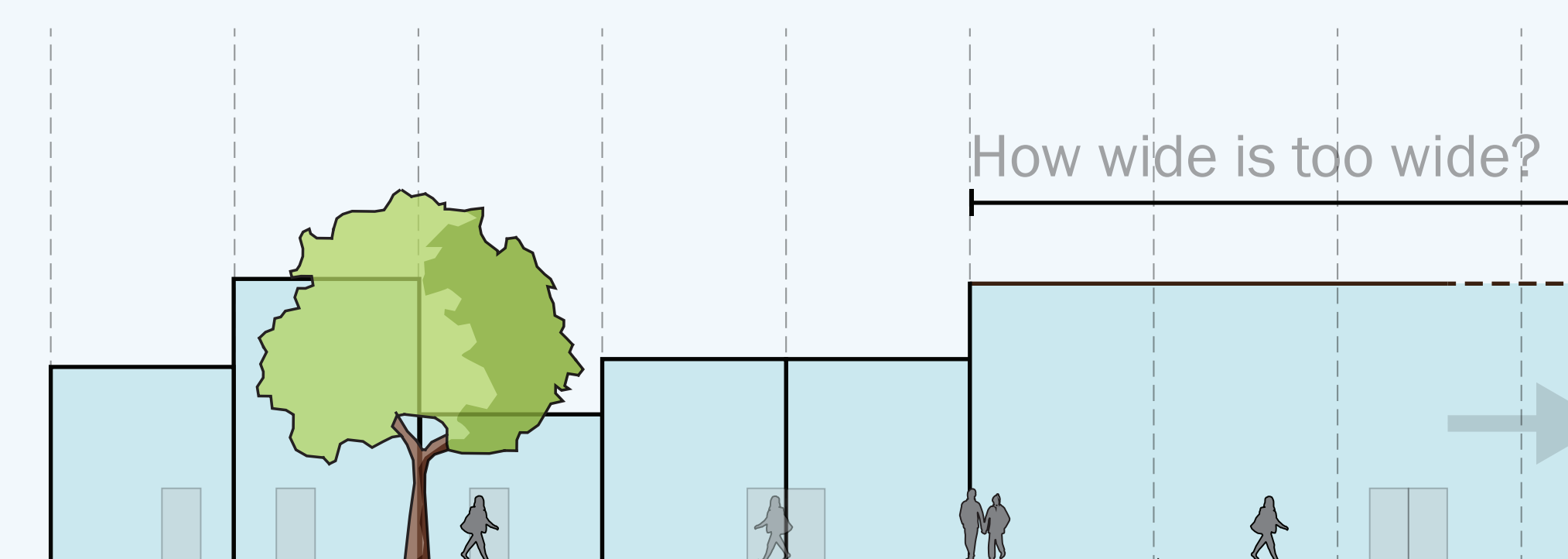


#### Why is Form Important?

Form helps define the context and character of a thoroughfare and encourages walking by providing visual interest to the thoroughfare. The scale and variety of buildings should help define the scale of the pedestrian environment. The architectural form of Whyte Avenue is typically small, detailed buildings that reflect their time period.

- **Contributes to Architectural Character at a neighbourhood scale**
- **Creates landmarks and unique buildings**
- **Contributes to Identity of Street**

### Mass: Width

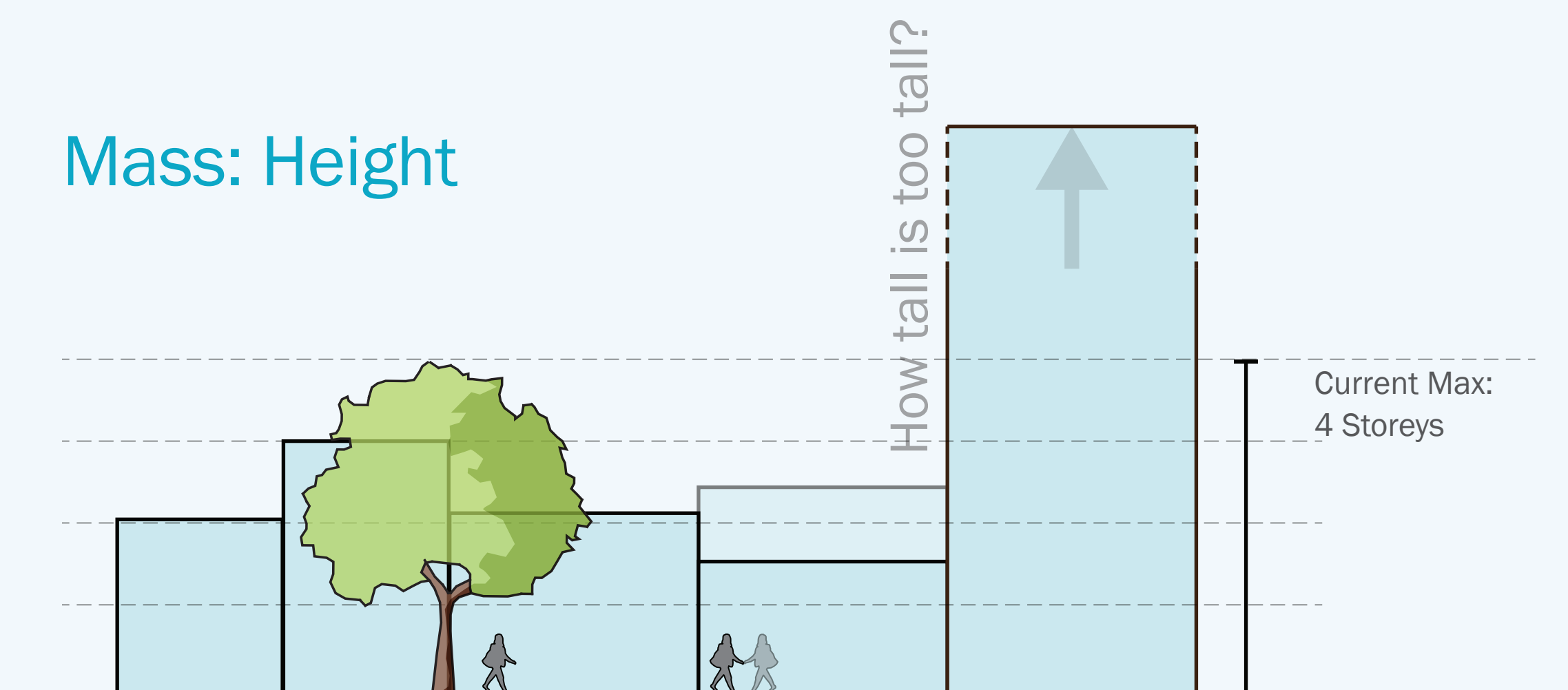


#### Why is Width Important?

Typically, older buildings consisted of smaller storefronts in order to create interest. This is particularly important along main streets, as it encourages people to wander along the street and creates a multitude of destinations. Generally, wider buildings should be visually broken into smaller building fronts.

- **Creates interesting streets with multiple entrances**
- **Creates visual interest by reducing blank walls**
- **Reduces the appearance of "big box" stores**
- **Consistency along a street**

### Mass: Height

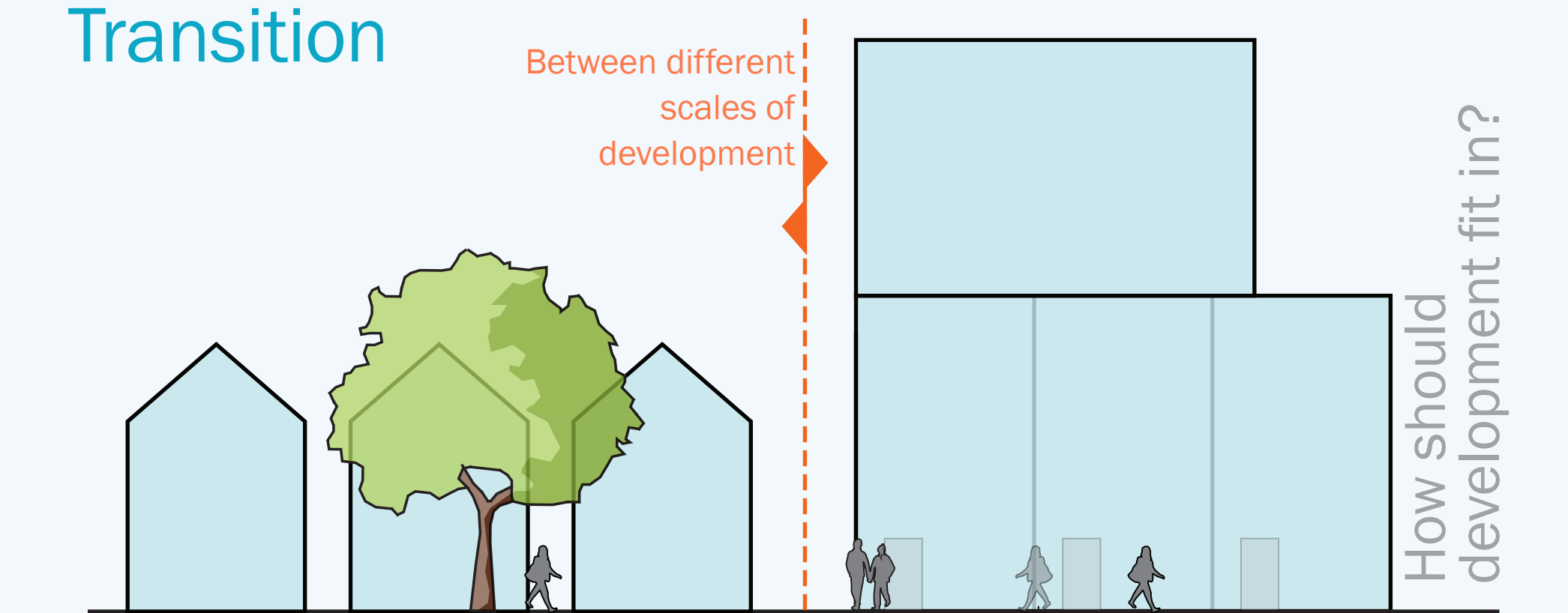


#### Why is Height Important?

Highly walkable thoroughfares do not require tall buildings. Street trees and other architectural features may be used to provide a similar sense of definition and enclosure in contexts with lower height and less dense buildings. Along Whyte Avenue, most buildings are typically 1-2 storeys, which reflects the small-scale heritage of the area.

- **Comfortable Human Scale**
- **Creates a sense of Enclosure**
- **Contributes to Neighbourhood Identity**
- **Consistency along a street**

### Transition



#### Why is Transition Important?

Buildings must provide a transition between different types of neighbourhoods. For example, single family homes might not be appropriate adjacent to a large, urban building. Developments in areas with a mix of development must consider their context and be sympathetic to the scale, form, and use of surrounding building types.

- **Sensitive to surrounding neighbourhoods**
- **Creates buildings that reflect surrounding character**
- **Reduces impact of density**