

Walterdale Bridge Replacement

Public Involvement Report (2010 – 2011)

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Summary:

In early 2010, the City of Edmonton's Transportation department initiated a study to review options and develop a recommendation for the replacement of the Walterdale Bridge, including a review of possible changes to the roads approaching the bridge. The study included evaluation of both road alignment and bridge style. Public consultation was undertaken to support this concept planning study, and played an important role in the analysis and selection of the preferred option, recognizing that the new bridge will become a point of pride for the citizens of Edmonton and a gateway to Edmonton's downtown.

The public involvement plan was developed as a three-phase approach to be undertaken throughout the concept planning process. The information gathered throughout the public involvement process was used to seek local knowledge about potential benefits and impacts of the various road and bridge options, and to identify items for further study and consultation as development of the recommendation proceeds into future design phases.

Approximately 440 participants contributed to the public involvement process for the concept planning phase. Over 20 public involvement activities were held, including profiling interviews, questionnaires, community league meetings, one-on-one discussions, special ceremonies/gatherings, an open house, and an information session.

Participants brought forward a broad range of issues and thoughts about the various road alignment options and bridge styles under consideration throughout the concept planning phase. Participants have shown general support for the replacement of the Walterdale Bridge with a signature bridge structure and the protection for continued traffic flow across the river at this location. However, some initial road alignment alternatives raised concerns relating to issues around changes to surrounding communities (i.e. Rossdale and Strathcona) and concerns about how the construction and ultimate road network may impact the surrounding area.



The planning, implementation and analysis of public involvement activities for the Walterdale Bridge Replacement concept planning study was an initiative undertaken with expertise and support from Gray Scott Consulting, ISL Engineering and Land Services, Al-Terra Engineering, Dialog, and the City of Edmonton.

Process:

The Walterdale Bridge Replacement and Approach Evaluation public involvement process has comprised of three key public involvement phases that have complimented key milestones for the project.

Phase 1: Summer/Fall 2010

The public involvement process for this project was initiated with a series of fifteen one-on-one profiling interviews with a list of selected stakeholder groups that the project team determined would be representative of the many stakeholder groups that are an integral part of the project. This information was used to refine the public involvement plan and identify key issues/concerns for review throughout the project.

Phase 2: Fall 2010

The second component of the public involvement plan was a widely promoted and well attended (approximately 225 participants) open house held on November 18, 2010. This open house was undertaken jointly with the West Rosedale Urban Design Plan Implementation project through the Planning and Development department of the City of Edmonton. The purpose of this open house was to review a number of bridge and roadway concepts, and solicit input from the public on how the options would impact:

- use of the area as a motorist, transit user, cyclist, pedestrian, visitor, and/or resident;
- neighbourhood and community access; and
- use and enjoyment of the River Valley.

Phase 3: Spring 2011

Acting upon the direction of the Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting on January 25, 2011, the project team completed additional work to identify a recommended concept plan that defines the alignment, bridge-style, and associated roadway improvements required for the project. The third phase of public involvement began in early March with a series of notifications and meetings with key stakeholder groups and culminated with an information session held on March 22, 2011 at the TransAlta Arts Barns.

Contact was made with twelve stakeholder groups prior to the information session. Fourteen contacts were made in total, including three contacts with EPCOR personnel. Nine were left with telephone messages providing details on the upcoming information session on March 22, 2011 and that the content of information session would be posted on the project website on March 23, 2011. All stakeholders were encouraged to contact a member of the project team for further information about the project, and five chose to not contact the project team as a follow up to the telephone message.

Telephone conversations were held with four of the fourteen contacts, primarily to provide background and context for the information session. All stated that they or their designate would attend the information session.

In addition, contact was made with five stakeholder groups offering the opportunity to meet with members of the project team to preview the material that was to be presented at the information session. The project team met with three of these groups (Aboriginal Relations Office, Rosedale Community League and Strathcona Community League and two other groups (Central Area Council of Community Leagues and Old Strathcona Business Association) declined the opportunity for a meeting but were informed of the information session.

The final component of the third phase of the Public Involvement Plan was the information session held on March 22, 2011 at the TransAlta Arts Barns from 4:00 PM to 8:30 PM. This session was held to share information on the recommendations and respond to questions and comments from members of the public.

Presentations of the recommended concept plan were made at 4:30 PM and 6:30 PM and each presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Participation:

From May 2010 to April 2011, over 20 formal and informal public involvement events were held to support the Walterdale Bridge Replacement concept planning study. These events included profiling interviews with key stakeholder groups, one-on-one discussions with known individual stakeholders, presentations and discussions with impacted community leagues, and an open house to present options and gather input from the general public via discussions, questionnaires, and written comments.

Following the open house in November 2010, public input and technical analysis were used to evaluate options and narrow down to a recommendation. Follow-up notifications were made to key individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups to discuss the recommendations and/or to gather additional feedback.

An information session was held on March 22, 2011 to present recommendations to the general public. A total of 163 participants attended the session and of those, 51 completed the survey handed to each as they arrived. In addition, the City received one letter and an email providing input regarding the concept planning project. As part of the comment forms, there were a total of 26 additional written comments provided by the submission deadline, not including the letter or the e-mail.

A total of approximately 440 people have participated in the various public involvement activities throughout the concept planning phase.

| Phase 1 | |
|--|--|
| May / July 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one discussions and follow-up with 6 individual stakeholders associated with Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground site. |
| September / October 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering and discussions with Aboriginal Elders (arranged by City of Edmonton Aboriginal Relations Office) On-site ceremony with Aboriginal Elders 10 participants at each event. |
| October / November 2010 and January 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Profiling interviews and discussions with 15 key stakeholder groups and contact with several others. Presentation to Rossdale Community League executive. Approximately 34 participants in total. |
| Phase 2 | |
| November 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 225 participants attended open house held November 18, 2010. Input was gathered through questionnaires and mark-ups on drawings during and following the open house. Approximately 80 questionnaires were returned, and extensive comments were returned via the marked-up drawings presented at the open house. |
| Phase 3 | |
| February / March 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up notifications and discussions with 6 individual stakeholders associated with the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground site. Follow-up notifications were made via telephone and email to key stakeholder groups and participants from November 2010 open house. One-on-one meetings with Rossdale and Strathcona Community League Presidents. Information session held March 22, 2010 (163 participants). |
| Total: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 440 participants / 32 interviews, consultation sessions, gatherings, presentations, and notifications. |

For a detailed list of public involvement events/promotional activities, please see Appendix A.

Key Themes:

Phase 1 & Phase 2: May to December 2010

A series of profiling interviews, meetings, and an open house with a questionnaire were undertaken to refine the public involvement plan and gain a greater understanding of key considerations, concerns, and impacts associated with the replacement of the Walterdale Bridge. These public involvement activities provided valuable input regarding the various options under consideration to assist with the development of a recommended option. The feedback obtained throughout Phases 1 and 2 in combination with technical analysis and direction from Transportation and Public Works Committee helped to evaluate options and develop final recommendations.

Common themes arising from the first and second phases of the public involvement were:

- Respect environment and context of the area;
- Minimize impacts to historical and cultural resources and treat cultural resources with respect;
- Provide access to commercial, recreational, residential, and other roads;
- Maintain/improve pedestrian and cyclist connections through area;
- Protect safety, integrity and character of adjacent neighbourhoods; and
- Reduce disruption during construction (traffic delay/detouring, noise, etc).

Participants provided several comments resulting in contradictory or competing themes when identifying the primary issues or concerns to be addressed through the study. While many indicated it is important to create a signature structure for Edmonton and its citizens, others raised concerns about the cost of such a structure.

Some participants indicated it is important to improve traffic flow, operations, and geometry, while others stressed the requirement to minimize impacts to parks and the environment in general. Improvements for traffic flow, operations, and geometry require improvements to the road network and inherently require some impacts to parkland.

Similarly, some participants indicated the desire to improve traffic flow or provide two-way traffic through the area, while others expressed concern that this would result in significant costs from a monetary or community impact perspective.

| Competing Themes | | |
|--|-----------|---|
| Signature Bridge | VS | Cost |
| Improve Traffic Flow, Operations, and Geometry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove hairpin turn at Saskatchewan Drive. • Reduce number of Lights approaching bridge. • Grade separate Gateway Boulevard. | VS | Minimize Impact to Parks and Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use existing roads / maintain status quo. • Minimize park requirements and minimize environmental footprint. |
| Two-way Traffic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow southbound access to Kinsmen Sports Centre and/or to Saskatchewan Drive. | VS | Cost, Community Impacts, and Traffic Impacts |
| Improve Traffic Flow, Operations, and Geometry | VS | Community Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect safety, integrity, and character or adjacent neighbourhoods. |

Although it is not possible to fully address all of these issues, the project team used this input as part of the evaluation process to ensure a balanced approach to the recommendation.

Phase 3: January to April 2011

Following a status update to Transportation and Public Works Committee on January 25, 2011, the project team used technical analysis and input received to refine options and develop a recommendation for bridge and road alignment and bridge style. The stakeholder and public input was used to ensure local issues were considered within the technical evaluation and to identify areas for further study and consultation.

Key stakeholders were contacted to notify them that a recommendation would be presented at a public information session and to allow key groups the opportunity to arrange a meeting to discuss the recommendations. Several discussions followed, including meetings with the presidents of Rosedale and Strathcona Community Leagues, in addition to one-on-one discussions and meetings with stakeholders expressing particular interest in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground site.

A public information session was held at the TransAlta Arts Barns on March 22, 2011 to present the recommendations to the public. Although only 51 completed comment forms were returned, a number of comments were provided for consideration.

The most common topic arising from the comments dealt with the pedestrian trails, bike trails and multi-use trails (10 responses in regard to this topic). There was overall support for the widened pedestrian facilities across the bridge, and four respondents indicated that they wished to see protection or segregation of pedestrians from the vehicular traffic crossing the bridge. Two respondents requested the pedestrian trail be on the west side of the bridge and two more requested that the multi-use trail be located on the east side of the bridge and the pedestrian trail be on the west side of the bridge.

Four comments were received that dealt exclusively with the public involvement process. The most common themes regarding the public involvement process were that respondents felt there should have been more information provided about the process itself and how and when to participate, and also about a need for more information about the historical resources that have an impact on the design.



Bridge capacity was also noted to be of concern and presented a competing theme among those providing comments. There were five comments related specifically to bridge capacity and number of lanes. While three individuals commented that two or three lanes were sufficient, two others specified the desire for at least four lanes and that the bridge capacity had to be planned for future growth of the city.

Access was an issue also raised as a concern. Some comments dealt with specific detail related to access/egress from the bridge, with two commenting on the intersection of Queen Elizabeth Park Road and the access/egress from the Kinsmen Sports Center.

Overall, there was support for the recommended road and bridge alignment and support for the recommended arch bridge structure. Participants noted a general need to respect the context of the area, particularly with regard to the river valley / park setting. The need to respect the historical resources and culture of the area was also of primary concern, with specific comments relating to the need to ensure proper treatment of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Grounds.

March 2011 Information Session: Participant Survey Form Results

- Of the 163 participants at the March 2011 information session, only 51 individuals returned completed comment forms.
- 80% of the respondents indicated the information presented was useful and informative, with 7% indicating they were neutral and 14% indicating disagreement.
- 77% of the respondents indicated the information was easy to understand, with 10% indicating they were neutral and 12% indicating disagreement.
- 85% of the respondents felt the project representatives were helpful, friendly and accessible, while 7% were neutral and 9% disagreed.
- 66% of the respondents indicated they were able to find satisfactory answers to questions, while 18% were neutral and 16% disagreed.
- 84% of the respondents indicated they had a better understanding of the project because of their attendance, while 8% were neutral and 10% disagreed.

Respondents by Postal Code

| Postal Code | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| T6E | 29 | 64% |
| T5K | 8 | 18% |
| T6C | 4 | 9% |
| T6B | 1 | 2% |
| T6G | 1 | 2% |
| Other | 2 | 4% |
| Total | 45 | |

Public Involvement:

Public involvement and supportive communications activities for the Waltherdale Bridge Replacement concept planning study has brought forward a wide range of thoughts and views on the signature bridge replacement. These have been considered within the process and are reported to City Council as part of the decision-making process.

It is important to note the process was not designed nor intended to collaborate with community and stakeholders to determine a recommended route. Many of the considerations within the bridge alignment and style selection process were based on technical analysis and evaluation criteria that were established to develop a recommendation that balances many competing interests and overarching project goals, including those defined by Transportation and Public Works Committee and City Council.

Similar to other major transportation initiatives, many participants support the public involvement process. For the Waltherdale Bridge Replacement concept planning study, the public involvement activities have been successful at bringing forward a broad range of views for consideration. However, a segment of the population would like a more active role in the decision-making process. The public involvement process will be continually refined as the project progresses through the next phases of design.

Next Steps:

A recommended bridge/road alignment and bridge style have been presented to the public and will be presented to City Council for approval on April 27, 2011. Once approved, the bridge replacement project will proceed into the preliminary and detailed design phase. Detailed engineering will be undertaken during preliminary and detailed design; this process is scheduled to begin in summer 2011. While design of the road and bridge is underway, public involvement will continue and will include:

- Consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders with respect to relocation of interpretive belvedere site at north end of existing bridge, taking into consideration that the burial site itself will be protected and treated with the utmost respect;
- Identifying if mitigations are needed per the City's *Urban Traffic Noise Policy*.
- Continued information sharing with regard to project status and timelines.

APPENDIX A: Detailed List of Public Involvement and Advertising Activities

| Date | Activity |
|--------------------|--|
| May 27 & 31, 2010 | Stakeholder Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one meetings with 5 stakeholders associated with the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Grounds. |
| June 11, 2010 | Stakeholder meeting / discussion with Rossdale Community League President. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| September 14, 2010 | Elders Gathering / Stakeholder Meeting with Aboriginal Elders in consultation with City of Edmonton Aboriginal Relations Office. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 participants |
| October 6, 2010 | Profiling Interview with EPCOR Water Services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 participants |
| October 12, 2010 | Advisory Committee Meeting with Garneau Community League of Edmonton. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| October 13, 2010 | Request for Profiling Interview with Downtown Business Association. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| October 13, 2010 | On-Site Ceremony with Aboriginal Elders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 participants |
| October 13, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Edmonton Heritage Council and Heritage Representative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 participants |
| October 14, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Edmonton Queen Riverboat Operator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| October 14, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Kinsmen Club of Edmonton. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| October 14, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Edmonton Capitals Baseball Club. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| October 20, 2010 | Advisory Committee Meeting with Rossdale Community League. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 participants |
| October 20, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Central Area Council. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 participants |
| October 20, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Kinsmen Sports Centre. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| October 21, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Old Strathcona Business Association. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| November 3, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Government of Alberta regarding Legislature grounds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 participants |
| November 4, 2010 | Profiling Interview with Strathcona Community League. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 participant |
| November 15, 2010 | Stakeholder Meeting with EPCOR Government Affairs and Transmission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 participants |
| November 18, 2010 | Public Open House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 225 participants Advertisement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print Ads: Edmonton Examiner (week of November 8, 2010), Edmonton Journal (November 6 and 13, 2011) and Edmonton Sun (November 7 and 14, 2011). Direct Mail: Distributed to approximately 6,000 residents within study area prior to open house. Portable Street Signs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walterdale Hill – North of Queen Elizabeth Park Road Saskatchewan Drive / 104 Street (eastbound) Rossdale Road, South of 97 Avenue (northbound) Walterdale Hill / 109 Street (northbound) Saskatchewan Drive / 99 Street (westbound) 104 Street, North of 84 Avenue (southbound) |

| Date | Activity |
|----------------------|---|
| November 26, 2010 | Stakeholder Meeting with Government of Alberta - Alberta Infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 participants |
| January 10, 2011 | Stakeholder Meeting with Rosssdale Community League Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 participants |
| February 25, 2011 | Follow-up Stakeholder notification with stakeholders associated with Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Grounds - Provided them with a copy of the Historical Statement of Justification for Information purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 participants included in the distribution. |
| March 1, 2011 | Notification via telephone of upcoming open house and offer to meet to discuss recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosssdale Community League (Accepted offer to meet). • Strathcona Community League (Accepted offer to meet). • Aboriginal Relations Office (Accepted offer to meet). • Old Strathcona Business Association (declined offer to meet). • Central Area Council (declined offer to meet). • 5 key stakeholder groups notified. |
| March 12, 2011 | Stakeholder meeting with Strathcona Community League President to discuss recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 participant |
| March 13 to 17, 2011 | Follow-up discussion meetings with stakeholders associated with the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Grounds to discuss recommendations and the relocation of the interpretive belvedere and the protection of the burial ground site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one meetings with 6 individual stakeholders. |
| March 14, 2011 | Stakeholder meeting with Rosssdale Community League President to discuss recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 participant |
| March 22, 2011 | Public Information Session to present bridge / road alignment and style recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 163 participants Advertisement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone notification of upcoming March 22, 2011 information session. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kinsmen Sports Center Administration (March 1, 2011) ○ Old Strathcona Foundation (March 1, 2011) ○ Edmonton Huskies Football Club (March 1, 2011) ○ Edmonton Heritage Council (March 8, 2011) ○ Garneau Community League of Edmonton (March 9, 2011) ○ EPCOR - Public and Government Affairs (March 9, 2011) ○ EPCOR Water Services (March 9, 2011) ○ EPCOR Distribution and Transmission (March 9, 2011) ○ Alberta Infrastructure (March 14, 2011) ○ Edmonton Capitals Baseball Club (March 15, 2011) ○ 10 key stakeholder groups notified via telephone. • E-mail notification to stakeholders who attended November 2010 open house (March 11, 2011) – 165 recipients. • Print Ads: Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Sun (March 10, 2011 and March 17, 2011). • Direct Mail: Distributed to approximately 6,000 residents within study area prior to information session. • Portable Street Signs (March 11 / 12, 2011): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Walterdale Hill – North of Queen Elizabeth Park Road ○ Saskatchewan Drive / 104 Street (eastbound) ○ Rosssdale Road, South of 97 Avenue (northbound) ○ Walterdale Hill / 109 Street (northbound) ○ Saskatchewan Drive / 99 Street (westbound) ○ 104 Street, North of 84 Avenue (southbound) |