



What We Heard Report Scona Road / Saskatchewan Drive Intersection Improvement

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Edmonton

What We Heard Report:

Scona Road/Saskatchewan Drive Intersection Improvement

Project Overview

The City is currently developing a plan for the modifications of the intersection of Scona Road and Saskatchewan Drive.

Community residents raised concerns following the construction of roadway improvements on Scona Road, as well as further south on 99 Street in 2012. Concerns included both vehicular and pedestrian conflicts at the Scona Road and Saskatchewan Drive intersection. Over the past five years, the City has implemented several improvements that were identified in various studies conducted by the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) alongside the U of A and UBC.

Since the original concept report for the geometric improvements, the City is exploring additional concepts in response to community concerns about the removal of the eastbound-southbound right turn movement. The City is looking to residents for input, along with traffic analysis, technical requirements and safety analysis to inform a decision for the design of this intersection.

Public Engagement Process

This phase of public engagement was designed to gather feedback from community members on the two options for the intersection at Scona Road and Saskatchewan Drive. The following elements of the design that were common to both options included:

- + Modification to the southbound to westbound right turn
- + Signalization of the southbound to westbound right turn
- + Removal of the multi-stage pedestrian crossing
- + Modification of the southwest corner to improve pedestrian crossing and vehicle guidance

On March 4, 2019, the project team presented two options at the Strathcona Neighborhood Renewal public engagement session to gather information and better understand the local knowledge, concerns, opportunities and priorities from the community members.

- + The event was held as a drop-in Open House at the Strathcona Community League Hall from 5:00 to 8:00 PM
- + There were twelve completed surveys in person, and 25 comments left on display boards of the proposed plans
- + An online public survey was available from March 4 to March 11, 2019: six responses were received
- + One letter was submitted from a near-by resident



WHAT WE HEARD: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

There continues to be significant interests from nearby residents in the design of the intersection at Scona Road and Saskatchewan Drive. The presentation of options at this event was in response to the community's concerns about the initially proposed changes that removed the eastbound to southbound right turn while optimizing the pedestrian crossing on the west leg of the intersection (Option 1). This drop-in Open House provided the community the opportunity to share their input on the proposed changes.

Participants were presented with two options under consideration:

OPTION 1

Option 1 was presented as per the geometry in the recommended option from the concept report. The details that were shared with the public for the Southwest Corner were as follows:

- + Removal of right turn movement. Current traffic counts show this movement sees less than 20 vehicles during peak hours
- + More visible pedestrian waiting locations
- + Reduced overall pedestrian crosswalk distance
- + With the removal of the Northwest island, this modified corner retains some visual guidance for southbound vehicles for lane continuity and traffic operations

Although some participants preferred this option for pedestrian safety, many felt it would leave residents and the community with limited alternatives for southbound travel by vehicle. The removal of right turn southbound was the most common concern shared by participants. Problems with this option that were identified by residents included:

- + Drivers will take short cuts on 89 Ave, 90 Ave, 91 Ave, 92 Ave and alleyways in the area
- + Residents and guests of condominiums will be prevented from heading south from the front of the building
- + Drivers that intend to turn right at 99 Street will instead go straight into the Mill Creek community on 92 Avenue to turn around

OPTION 2

Option 2 was presented as a version of Option 1 with geometric modifications to maintain the eastbound to southbound right turn movement. The details that were shared with the public for the Southwest Corner were as follows:

- + Maintains right turn movement
- + More visible pedestrian waiting locations
- + Increase in pedestrian crosswalk distance from Option 1
- + The visual guidance for southbound vehicles is less than for Option 1
- + Larger vehicles will have challenges making the tighter right turn movement

Several participants at the information session indicated that option two was their preferred option. Participants felt this design was more favourable due to the inclusion of the eastbound to southbound right turn from Saskatchewan Drive to 99 Street.

Themes

The themes that were most frequently commented on by participants were the importance of safety for pedestrians and retaining the right turn for southbound access from Saskatchewan Drive to 99 Street.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Pedestrian safety was mentioned by multiple participants at the Open House and the online survey. The two options presented attempted to prioritize safety of pedestrians while accommodating vehicles.

SOUTHBOUND ACCESS FROM SASKATCHEWAN DRIVE

There was resounding support to maintain the right turn eastbound Saskatchewan Drive to southbound 99 Street. Keeping this turn would ensure vehicles do not cut through the neighbourhood to access 99 Street southbound. Residents from the nearby condos and Skunk Hollow would be able to access amenities in the area, such as the University of Alberta Hospital, Whyte Avenue, and Calgary Trail, without detouring through downtown and the river valley.

OTHER FEEDBACK

Comments were also received on leaving the intersection exactly how it is currently. Some participants did not feel that a change is necessary for the intersection.

The upcoming neighbourhood renewal project was mentioned several times by participants. There are improvements happening in the area for roadways, sidewalks and shared-use paths. Some of these improvements include creating one-way roads though the neighbourhood on adjacent roads. Some participants had concerns that the neighbourhood renewal plans and changes to this intersection would cause more problems for area residents.

Another suggestion that was repeated by many participants is the addition of a pedestrian signal and/or crossing lights to increase the visibility and safety of pedestrians in the existing configuration.

Next Steps

Information received will assist the City to develop the final design for Scona Road/Saskatchewan Drive Intersection Improvement. A completed design will be communicated once finalized.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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