

ENGAGEMENT UPDATE: WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR

What We Did

Input from stakeholders and the community is key to the success of the Balwin and Belvedere Transportation Revitalization project.

There were two ways that the project team gathered various perspectives and feedback:

- In-person and virtual stakeholder meetings with businesses, institutions and the Balwin Community League.
- Virtual engagement for the residents of the community and others interested in the project. The virtual engagement on the Engaged Edmonton website included a brief survey (open for feedback from November 23, 2022 to January 2, 2023) asking for input on the location and design for an entry feature, and a Miro interactive project board with a map of each of the three project corridors. The Engaged Edmonton site included the concept plans for each corridor, which showed the proposed roadway improvements. It also included proposed entry features.

How We Communicated

- Postcards were mailed to all households and businesses in the project area. The postcards introduced the project to the community and encouraged residents and business owners to participate in the survey.
- Road signs were placed throughout the project area inviting people to have their say and share suggestions for the improvements.
- Emails and letters were delivered to businesses and institutions along the three corridors.
- Social media ads to promote the survey were shared.

What We Learned

Overall, stakeholders and community members welcomed the project as a way to add infrastructure to the area to improve vibrancy, community pride, walkability and other means of active transportation. Stakeholders liked the temporary nature of the improvements, recognizing that items such as adaptable curbs and barriers can be optimized based on real-world use.

Themes

Entry Feature

A webpage on Engaged Edmonton invited feedback on the roadway improvements being proposed. A survey was also included, asking respondents for their preference of location and potential design of an entry feature. Four different options were provided, with each option presenting a specific location along with some feasible design options for that location.

Participants liked the idea of an entry feature that welcomed people to these historic communities. They preferred a more traditional design that in some way reflected the backstory that built the community's presence in Edmonton. The community overwhelmingly favoured the 66 Street and Fort Road intersection location for the entry feature with 64% of respondents "liking" or "strongly liking" it.

On a scale of 1 to 5 what do you think of THE LOCATION of this option?

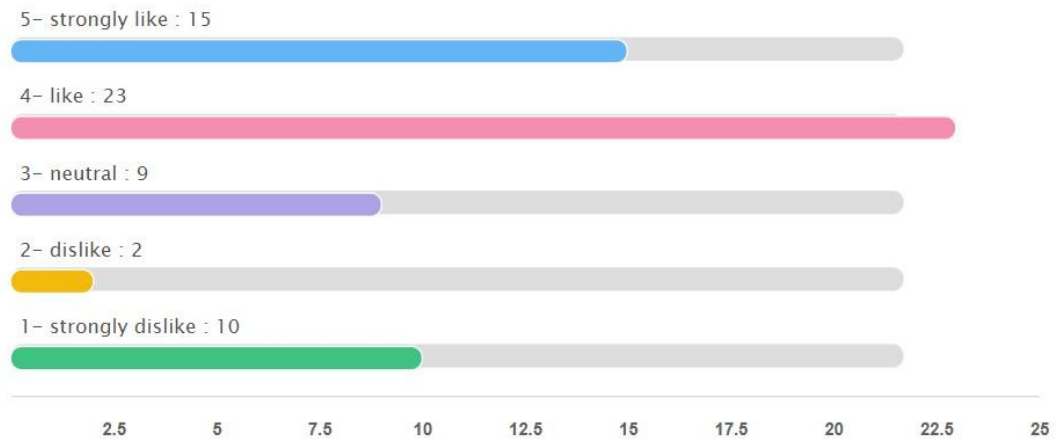


Figure 1 (above): Survey results showing highest preference for 66 street and Fort Road location (location A)



Figures 2 and 3 (above): Examples of potential entry feature designs for location A (66 street and Fort Road)

Active Mode Connectivity

Participants welcomed the proposed shared pathway and sidewalk additions and suggested additional infrastructure to enhance safety and connectivity. The suggested improvements included extending the proposed shared pathway on 127 Avenue east to Fort Road, and adding missing sidewalk links on the south sides of the roadway on the eastern segments of 127 Avenue and 128 Avenue. Participants would like to see more continuity for pedestrians, those with mobility aids, and cyclists to reduce street crossings and the need to dismount a bike. Some businesses along 127 Avenue stated concerns related to potential impacts to inbound and outbound traffic from their businesses.

Safety for Pedestrians and Cyclists

All respondents noted a preference towards additional safety measures for pedestrians and cyclists. Participants suggested adding more of the proposed infrastructure - such as rapid flashers, and raised crosswalks and intersections - in other areas. There were questions about Emergency Medical Services' and Fire Rescue Services' ability to navigate narrower roads and raised crosswalks and intersections based on the proposed alterations.

Impact on Business Operations

Businesses and institutions offered feedback and provided specific information related to potential impacts to their business or organization based on the design that was shown. They highlighted the importance of trucks being able to continue to access their loading docks, as well as the impact of limiting turning on 127 Avenue into the shopping plaza at 127 Avenue and 81 Street. Business owners and institutions also encouraged visible sight lines when planting trees, and if possible, the addition of extra street lighting or pedestrian lights.

Traffic Challenges in the area

While people were pleased with the proposed improvements, they also highlighted traffic congestion and safety concerns. These included signalization on 82 Street and 127 Avenue, short cutting down 127 Avenue and speeding along 130 Avenue. Although these are out of project scope, the project team will carry these views forward to the appropriate City departments.

Safety

Participants voiced their concerns regarding safety in the area. They suggested that deciduous trees be planted rather than coniferous trees, and that tree plantings retain sight lines to open spaces to improve visibility and alleviate safety concerns.

Next Steps

A detailed What We Heard report will be released at the conclusion of the Concept phase. Based on what was learned from participants, the project team is making changes to the initial Concept Plans shown to stakeholders and the online community. Where possible, a revised Concept Plan will incorporate many of participants' ideas and suggestions.