

Rossdale Transportation Network What We Heard Report

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| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

Thank you for sharing with us.

Updating the roadways, paths and sidewalks in the Rossdale area is a vital step in achieving the vision for the River Crossing area, as outlined in the River Crossing Business Plan. Roadway functions are being reconsidered and accommodation must be made for other forms of transportation to create a place that welcomes gathering, encourages active transportation (walking, cycling and wheeling) and accommodates drivers traveling into and out of the Rossdale neighbourhood.

We know that these changes may affect the way you travel into, out of, and through this area, and we know we must carefully balance the needs of all users.

Your input is an important element in our decision making.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted nearly every aspect of daily life, including how we were able to connect with you regarding this project. Thank you to everyone who engaged with us virtually. All comments were considered by the project team.

The City of Edmonton remains committed to delivering project information and meaningful public engagement opportunities as efficiently and safely as possible.

Thank you.

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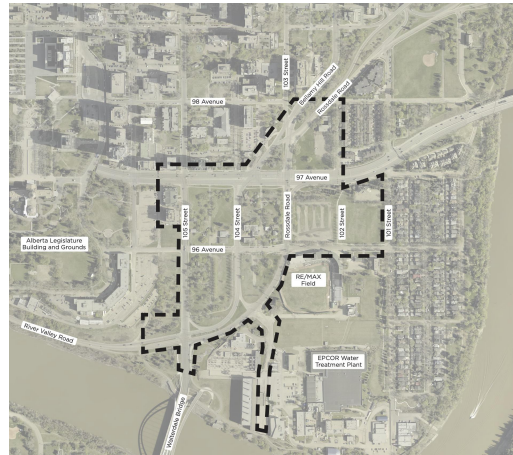
A. Project Overview

The Rossdale Transportation Network project is developing roadway and streetscape designs in the Rossdale area that will improve active transportation connections (walking, cycling and wheeling) and accommodate drivers travelling into and out of the Rossdale neighbourhood.

The designs being recommended in the transportation network plan were directed by several existing plans: [River Crossing Business Plan \(2018\)](#), [Rossdale Area Redevelopment Plan \(2021\)](#) and the [Heritage Interpretive Plan \(2017\)](#), along with current technical studies and analysis conducted by the Project Team.

The transportation network plan includes traffic directions, road closures and new connections required to ensure that all modes of transportation can be used to move to, from and within the River Crossing area. It also considers future development in the area and identifies streets and avenues that would benefit from streetscaping (landscaping, street furniture), active mode connections and parking.

This report summarizes the input from Public Engagement Phase 1 from September to December 2021.



Rossdale Transportation Network Project Area

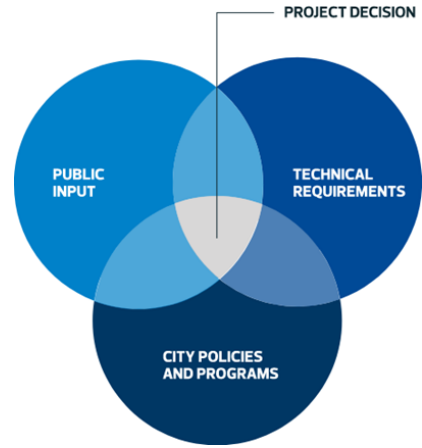
B. Public Engagement

How Decisions Are Made

As part of the decision-making process, decisions are made based on three components:

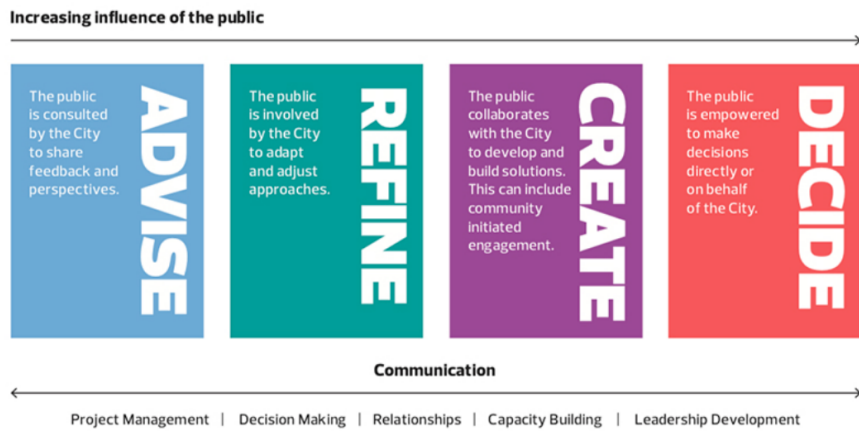
- **Technical Requirements** - What infrastructure best meets the area needs, where it can fit, and what impacts it will have to the immediate and surrounding area

- **City Policies and Programs** - how City initiatives and activities are implemented
- **Public Input** - local knowledge and feedback of community stakeholders



Role of the Public

The public engagement spectrum is a tool that explains the level of influence the public has when they participate in City of Edmonton public engagement activities. The level of influence for this phase of the project is **REFINE**.



City of Edmonton Public Engagement Spectrum



Rossdale Transportation Network project area.

C. How We Engaged

During this first round of engagement, the project team connected with active transportation users in the project area to understand the current use and condition of the active transportation network. The team also met with stakeholders to gather insights and input on the roadway changes coming to the Rosssdale area transportation network.

Design ideas on how to incorporate active transportation and streetscaping throughout the project area were then prepared and shared with the public for feedback.

A summary of the design ideas and what we heard are included later in this report.



Project Roadmap

Engagement activities include the following:

Intercept Survey

On September 19, 2021, intercept interviews were conducted with people who were walking and biking through the project area. A total of 19 people participated. Additional dates were planned for this activity to reach a larger number of active transportation users; however, they were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Online and Paper Public Survey

An online survey was posted to the project webpage for all Edmontonians and was also shared with the Edmonton Insight Community. Paper surveys were distributed to all homes and businesses in the Rosssdale neighbourhood. A drop box was installed outside of the Rosssdale Community league where respondents could submit the paper surveys.

The survey was open between November 24 and December 8, 2021. More than 700 participants completed the survey.

Online Learning Event

One public online learning event was hosted on the Zoom platform on December 1, 2021 from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. The project team shared the draft designs in a presentation and answered participant questions. A total of 29 participants attended this event.

A recording of the presentation was posted on the project website for those who were not able to join.



December 1, 2022 Online Event.

Stakeholder Meetings

Online stakeholder meetings were held between October 1 and November 30, 2021.

This provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions and identify concerns they may have about the current network, future possibilities and the project overall. Meetings were held with the following:

- Rossdale Community League
- Paths for People
- Downtown Business Association
- EPCOR
- Edmonton Fire and Rescue Services
- Edmonton Waste Services
- Prairie Sky Gondola
- Alberta Infrastructure
- Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition
- River Valley Alliance

Communication

To promote the project and the engagement opportunities, the following communication methods were used:

Webpage

To inform engagement participants, the project webpage (edmonton.ca/RossdaleTransportationNetwork) included a design booklet with details of the changes to the transportation network plans and ideas for the future.

Newsletters and Postcards

- 5138 newsletters and postcards were sent to residential and business addresses in Rossdale and nearby communities

Road Signs

- 7 temporary signs were placed along commuter routes leading to and within the River Crossing area

Yard Signs

- 40 temporary signs were placed throughout the River Crossing area, including along paths and trails

Digital Billboards

- Ads were placed on 7 digital billboards around the City

Online Advertisements

- Social media posts were made through the City of Edmonton's Facebook and Twitter accounts

D. Who Was Engaged

Who Was Engaged:

- Active Transportation Users
- General Public / Network Users
- Rossdale Residents
- Key Stakeholders (see [stakeholder meetings](#) for details):
 - Rossdale Community League
 - Paths for People
 - Downtown Business Association
 - EPCOR
 - Edmonton Fire and Rescue Services
 - Edmonton Waste Services
 - Prairie Sky Gondola
 - Alberta Infrastructure
 - Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition
 - River Valley Alliance

E. What We Asked

Intercept Surveys

Respondents were asked to share the route they most often take through the project area, what is working and what is not for active transportation users in the project area and what makes a 'great street' for those who walk, bike and roll.

Public Survey

Respondents were asked to share their thoughts on what the City should consider when moving forward with the transportation network plans.

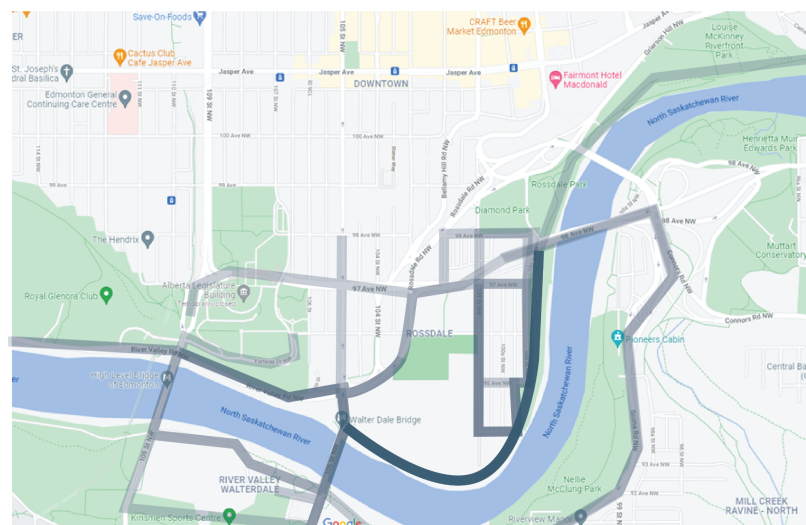
Stakeholder Meetings

During the early stages of the planning process, stakeholders shared local knowledge and expertise relative to the organization or City branch which they were representing. That input was used to inform the designs that were shared with the public. As each stakeholder has a diverse interest, no common themes are reported.

F. What We Heard: Intercept Survey

Today, where are you going to and coming from? Are there other places you go to when travelling through this area?

There is a mix of residents, riverside trail users and people from neighbouring areas travelling through the neighbourhood. The riverside trail was a popular route for those who live outside of Rossdale, while residents walked both on the trails and in the neighbourhood. The Walterdale Bridge, community park and river valley trails were mentioned as destinations.



Heat map of popular routes. The darker the route, the more often it was mentioned.

As you move through this area, what do you think is working on the current roadway network? What could be improved?

The paths are considered to be in good condition, but are narrow and congested in some areas. There is concern about the safety of walkers on the trail under the bridges due to homeless encampments nearby. There are also concerns about scooters and cyclists going too fast near people walking on the shared-use paths and that congestion may increase when local developments are built.

When thinking about how you experience the streets as a pedestrian, what makes a street great?

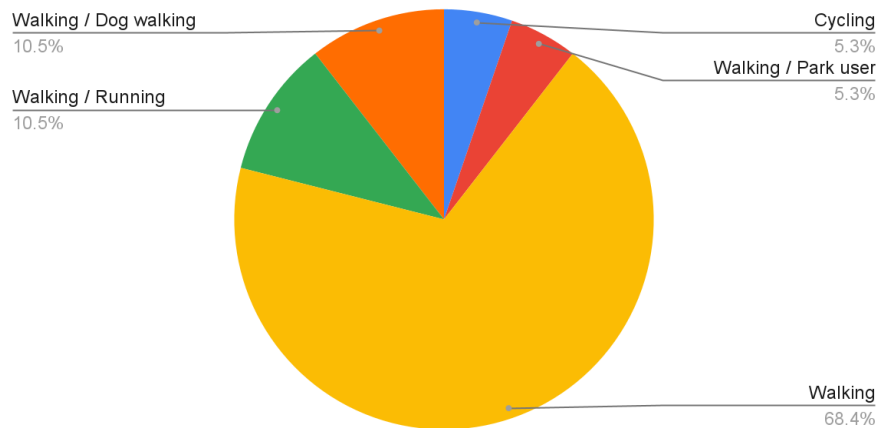
People suggested that wide sidewalks, good maintenance, separation from traffic, treed boulevards and more garbage cans are what makes a great street. Two respondents said that more and clearer signage is needed on the shared-use paths. Less conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and e-scooter users is desired.

When thinking about how you experience the streets as a cyclist, what makes a street great?

Only one set of cyclists was spoken to, and they suggested bike lanes are what make a street great.

Respondent method of travel:

Respondent was (walking, cycling, taking transit, wheeling, other)



G. What We Heard: Public Survey

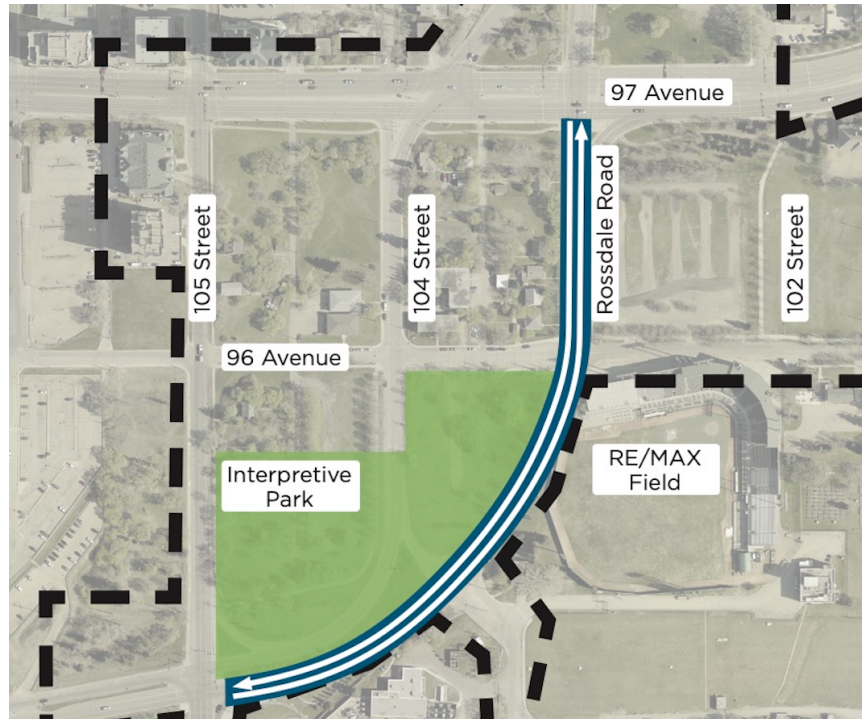
"This looks good. Rossdale Road never needed to be three lanes as most traffic forms a line in the right lane to turn right onto 97 Avenue."

"Make sure it is safe for cyclists. Include pedestrian overpasses where needed."

"Bikes do not belong on the road with vehicles."




"Get rid of the ridiculous bike lanes."

Rossdale Road between 97 Avenue and 105 Street



Design ideas: Rossdale Road between 97 Avenue and 105 Street.

Legend

-  Two-way connection
-  Project boundary
-  Adjacent city initiatives

Design summary

Sidewalks, bike lanes and landscaped boulevards will be considered to improve the experience for active users. Rossdale Road will open to two-way traffic providing a minimum one lane northbound and one lane southbound. Access to River Valley Road from Rossdale Road will be maintained.

Design ideas for this area include:

- Active transportation:
 - Wide pedestrian spaces
 - Space for a bike lane (type to be determined)
- Streetscape elements:
 - Landscaping, street furniture
 - Potential permanent on street parking

"This looks like a great start to improving what is currently a dangerous mess."

"I'm afraid that it will be difficult to access that area if you cut public transit."

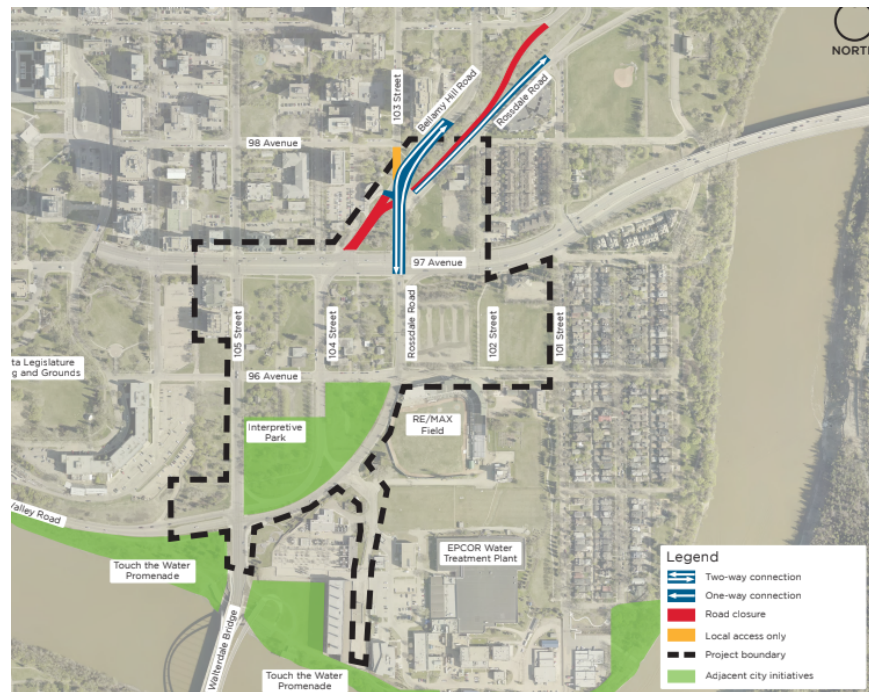
"This is going to be a nightmare for residents that will likely make our apartments less affordable in the long run. So please be patient with us if it seems like we don't want this."

What we heard

Respondents favour prioritizing active transportation (walking, biking and wheeling) along Rossdale Road and highlight the need to ensure safety for all users. There is a desire to consider the experience of those who walk and bike by ensuring sidewalks and paths are wide enough, separating both bikes and pedestrians from cars, and providing lighting and safe crossings. Both 96 Avenue and 97 Avenue were highlighted as priorities for safe crossings.

There is support for the idea of making Rossdale Road into a two-way road. Many respondents indicated two lanes in each direction is preferred to reduce congestion in the area during peak times.

Bellamy Hill / 97 Avenue / Rossdale Road / 103 Street intersection



Design ideas: Bellamy Hill / 97 Avenue / Rossdale Road / 103 Street intersection.

Design summary

To simplify this area, several of the current access and merge lanes will be closed or rerouted. The southbound access to 97 Avenue via 99 Avenue/ Bellamy Hill Avenue and the northbound route from 97 Avenue to Rossdale Road will be maintained.

Design ideas for this area include:

- Enhanced active transportation connections (walking, cycling and wheeling)

What we heard

There is support for the design ideas from those who believe the changes will eliminate confusion for drivers and others who move

through this complex intersection, ultimately improving traffic flow.

Those who are not supportive share concerns that the design will impede traffic flow and increase congestion ultimately negatively impacting downtown. The closure of the access to 103 Street is noted as the removal of a major route for drivers exiting downtown.

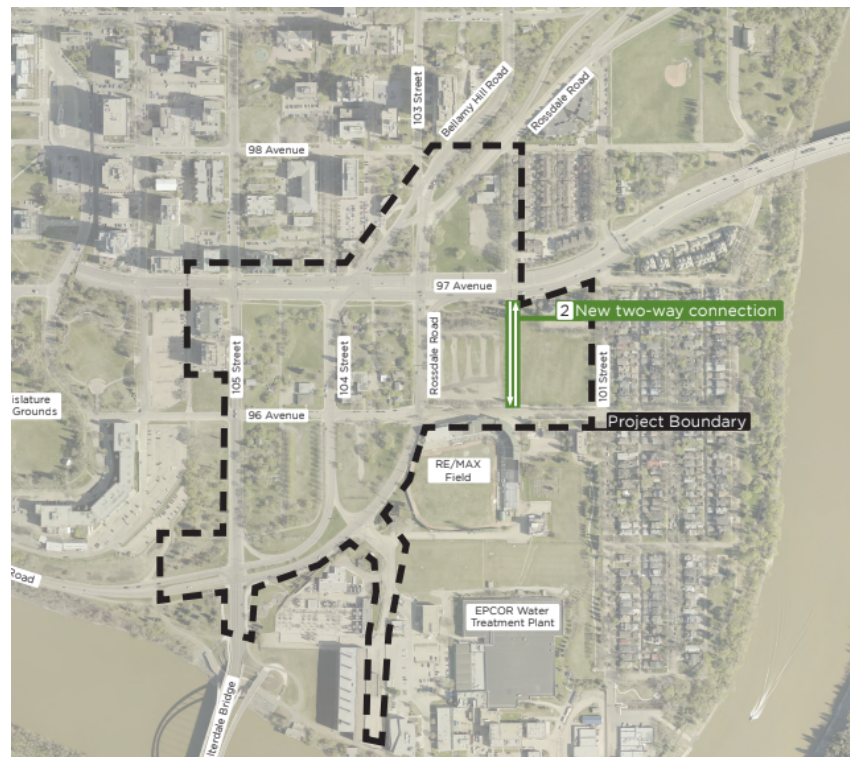
There are also concerns that the design will limit or remove access to some of the residential buildings in the area.

Respondents again voice a desire to prioritize active transportation (walking, biking, wheeling) separate bikes from cars. Others call on the City to prioritize cars.

102 Street between 97 Avenue and 96 Avenue

"A fantastic idea that will help catalyze new development in the area. As someone who spends a lot of time in the area, I can't wait to see new development, shops and restaurants in the area! Traffic calming will be critical for this road."

"I don't think a road is needed here. This should be park space."



Design ideas: 102 Street between 97 Avenue and 96 Avenue.

Design Summary

A new roadway connection, 102 Street between 97 Avenue and 96 Avenue, will provide important pedestrian and vehicle connections for a lively pedestrian-focused commercial street to support future redevelopment.

"I do not approve of opening 102 Street to cars. The pedestrian/bike path needs to remain untouched, although it could do with improvements."

Design ideas for this area include:

- Roadway:
 - Shared street (a street that prioritizes active transportation (walking, cycling, and wheeling) and supports future commercial and retail development)
 - Active transportation
 - Enhanced connections (walking, cycling and wheeling)
- Streetscape elements
 - Landscaping, street furniture
 - On-street parking

What We Heard

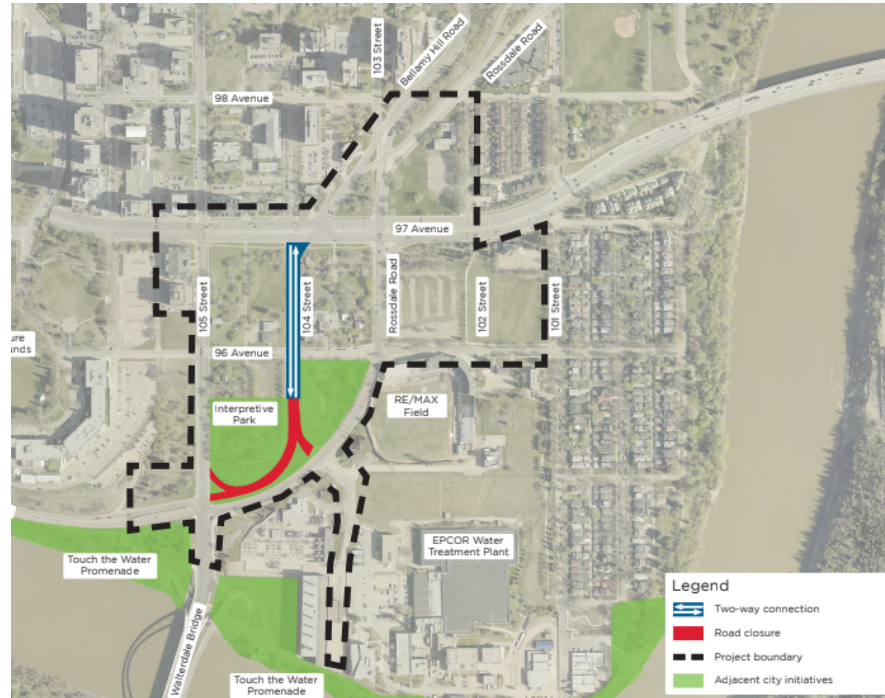
Confusion exists about the need and rationale for this new roadway therefore, many respondents suggest that the area should be left the way it currently is, without the new road.

There is support for the idea of a shared street, as well as a desire by some to prioritize active transportation (walking, biking and wheeling) and completely close the street to cars. However, if cars are allowed, respondents feel that the transportation modes should be separated from each other meaning cars and bikes and pedestrians should each have their own spaces.

Concerns include that the new 102 Street will lead to shortcutting and provide an unwelcome access into the Rossdale neighbourhood and that the addition of traffic signals at the intersection of 97 Avenue and 102 Street will cause vehicles to back up along 97 Avenue, which is a major east/west connection causing traffic delays. Respondents indicate any changes to this area should not impede vehicular traffic flow.

104 Street between Rossdale Road and 97 Avenue

"This is the main route our running group uses to get from Rossdale to the Legislature grounds. My biggest complaint there is that it is steep. If there are cars parked, make sure sidewalks are good for runners as it will be narrower."



Design ideas: 104 Street between Rossdale Road and 97 Avenue.

"No need to do anything. That route connects nothing to nothing and should be closed entirely. At worst, shorten it as an access route for the future park. Or close it entirely."

Design Summary

With Rossdale Road accommodating northbound and southbound vehicle traffic within the River Crossing area, 104 Street's reduced traffic flow makes it a prime location for a lively pedestrian-focused commercial street.

It will also be an important pedestrian connection to current and future attractions such as the interpretive park, Traditional Burial Grounds/ Fort Edmonton Cemetery, Rossdale Power Plant and Touch the Water Promenade.

Design ideas for this area include:

- Active transportation:
 - Enhanced connections (walking, cycling and wheeling)
- Streetscape elements:
 - Landscaping, street furniture
 - On-street parking

"The City should consider making this an active transport only corridor. Remove cars entirely."

What we heard

There is general support for the design ideas presented for this roadway that focus on prioritizing active transportation (walking, biking and wheeling). Some suggest the City should go a step further and consider closing 104 street to cars entirely.

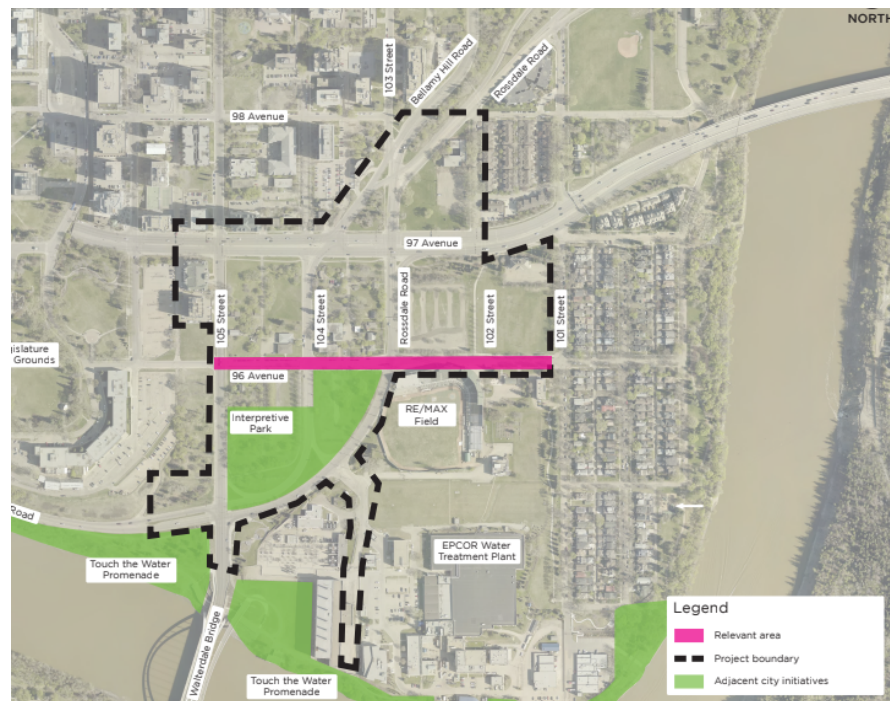
Respondents remind the City to ensure the safety of those who walk, bike and wheel including appropriate crossings and adequate connections and to consider the parking needs of those who will travel by car.

Concerns were raised about the potential negative impact on traffic flow and therefore increased congestion with fewer travel lanes, the addition of traffic signals at 97 Avenue and the need for access to River Valley Road.

96 Avenue between 105 Street and 101 Street

"I do not support this area becoming a retail destination. I do not consider it to be appropriate or sustainable in the long term."

"Traffic calming will be critical to ensure the roadway is usable for everyone and doesn't just become a 'shortcut' for commuters."



Design ideas: 96 Avenue between 105 Street and 101 Street.

Design Summary

With its position between the River Crossing area, South Rossdale, the North Saskatchewan River, future interpretive park and the Legislature grounds, 96 Avenue is perfectly situated for an east-west active transportation mode connection and future retail destination.

The design ideas for this area include:

- Roadway:
 - Shared collector road (a street that prioritizes active transportation (walking, cycling and wheeling) and supports future commercial and retail development)
- Active transportation:
 - Enhanced connections (walking, cycling and wheeling)
- Streetscape elements:
 - Landscaping, street furniture
 - On-street parking

What We Heard

Respondents offer general support for the proposed design ideas with a desire to prioritize active transportation (walking, biking, wheeling) and to ensure that appropriate connections are provided for cyclists to link to key destinations and the broader bike network.

Some respondents, who wish to prioritize cars, do not support the design ideas while others suggest potentially closing the road to cars completely.

Respondents note that for retail and commercial businesses to be viable, they must be appropriately supported which includes both vehicle parking and active mode connections.

There are concerns about traffic flow and congestion as a result of this design and respondents ask the City to consider impacts on the overall vehicle network, access to Rossdale neighbourhood and vehicle and pedestrian traffic following events and activities at ReMax Field and other locations in the area.

Rossdale Power Plant / Water Treatment Access

“A public access road here will help bring people down to the waterfront.”

“This is a perfect connection to the multi-use trail that runs along the river. Ensure that it is connected.”



Design ideas: Rossdale Power Plant / Water Treatment Access.

Design Summary

To support the redevelopment of the site, active transportation (walking, cycling and wheeling) connections to adjacent projects and future developments will be developed and enhanced, while vehicle access will be maintained.

The design ideas for this area include:

- Active transportation: Enhanced connections (walking, cycling and wheeling)

What We Heard

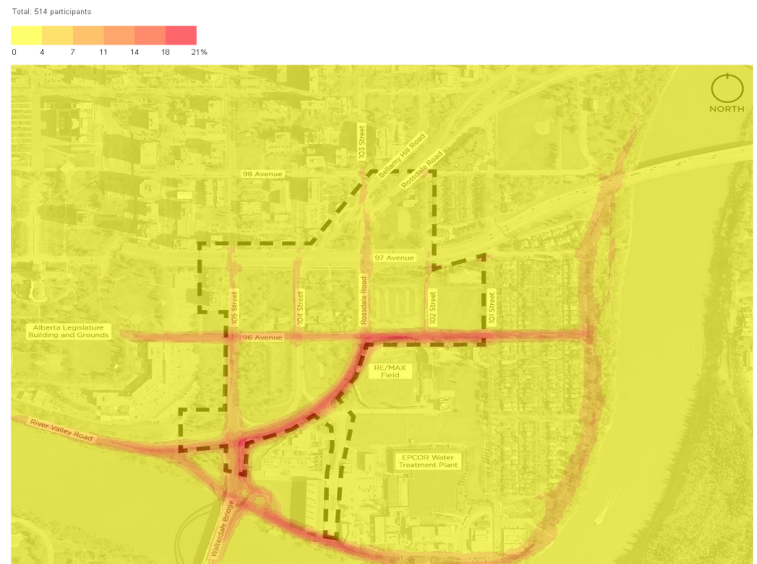
There is general support for the design ideas in this area, with some noting the need for parking in this area and to consider and coordinate with adjacent projects during the planning process.

Walk and Wheel Routes

Ensuring great connections for those who walk or wheel (wheelchair, roller blade, scooter, etc.) is a key element to the vision for the River Crossing area. The draft concept design, to be shared in spring 2022, will consider public feedback and include designs for active transportation connections.

Respondents were asked if they walk or wheel (wheelchair, roller blade, scooter) through the area, to draw a line showing the route they would generally take through the project area including where they generally enter and exit.

The following heat map shows the most popular routes.



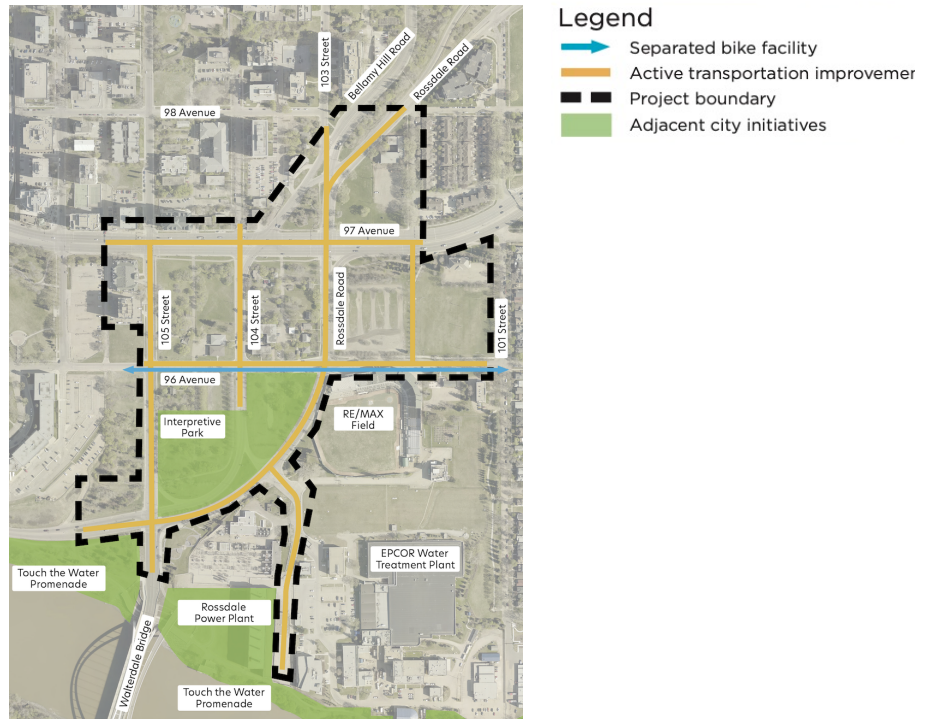
“Ensure that cycling routes are separated from pedestrian routes for safety reasons.”

Proposed Cycle Connections

“Separated bike paths are always the better choice.”

“Take cycling off Rossdale Road altogether.”

“Not enough cyclists to justify restricting traffic for bike lanes.”



Proposed Cycle Connections.

Design Summary

The River Crossing Business Plan identifies a bike network that improves the cycling connectivity within and through the River Crossing area.

Respondents were asked to comment on the bike network and what the City needs to consider when moving forward with these proposed cycling connections.

What We Heard

Respondents indicate that safety is a priority when considering adding bike connections in the River Crossing area. Suggestions include consideration of lane widths for active transportation noting that widths should be wider on hills and next to heavy vehicle traffic.

A common theme around safety is the desire to separate bikes from both cars and pedestrians. It was also noted that it is important to recognize that hills into the downtown are too steep for cyclists and therefore bike lanes should be placed more appropriately.

When developing bike routes there is a desire to ensure appropriate connections to key arterials and destinations including River Valley Road, Walterdale Bridge, the Legislature grounds, Downtown and the river valley trails.

Respondents ask planners to consider bike movements, ensuring routes/connections are easy to navigate, for example, eliminate dead-ends and consider signal timings, turning angles and how and where cyclists cross vehicular traffic.

Final Comments

Respondents were asked to share any additional issues, concerns or opportunities about the Rosssdale Transportation Network as final comments. The most common themes heard were:

- General support for the project and design ideas presented.
- Concern about the negative impacts of the design on traffic flow which will increase congestion into and out of Downtown, the Rosssdale neighbourhood and limit access to River Valley Road.
- Some believe that the project is unnecessary and that tax dollars should be spent in other areas.
- Some respondents urge the City to prioritize cars over all other modes of transportation, noting that Edmonton is a winter City and only limited numbers of people commute by bike or on foot.
- Respondents who support the design's focus on active transportation (walking, biking and wheeling) urge the City to prioritize these modes to ensure the network provides a safe and pleasurable experience for these users.
- Underscoring the need for safety for all users, respondents favour separate bike lanes to provide individual spaces for cars, bikes and pedestrians.
- Those that prioritize cars, indicate they do not support this project or changes to the roadway network noting they are unnecessary.
- Respondents suggest that by improving and enhancing the River Crossing area as a destination, parking will still be required and this aspect should be considered and included in the design.

G. What Happens Next?

In the next phase of engagement, the project team will meet with key stakeholders to share the draft concept plan. The draft concept plan will be refined and shared with the public.

The draft concept design, to be shared in spring 2022, will consider this public feedback and include detailed designs for active transportation connections, streetscape elements, number of roadway lanes and parking areas.

Details about upcoming public input opportunities will be available on the project website and advertised throughout the area.

Sign up for project email update at
edmonton.ca/RossdaleTransportationNetwork

Questions?

Website: edmonton.ca/RossdaleTransportationNetwork

Email: rossdaleTN@edmonton.ca