

City of Edmonton **Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program**

# What We Heard Report

## St. Albert Trail to 97 Street

**Phase 1 Engagement:  
Identify Issues, Values and Ideas  
October to December 2019**

**SHARE YOUR VOICE  
SHAPE OUR CITY**

**Edmonton**

# Thank you for talking with us.

We know that changes to Yellowhead Trail may affect you, the way you travel, and the way your business operates.

This report details what we heard during Phase 1 engagement.

You told us that the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion needs to balance free-flowing traffic with access on, off, and across Yellowhead Trail. Your input clarified how you travel through the area, current issues in the project area, and issues that may arise once Yellowhead Trail becomes a freeway between St. Albert Trail and 97 Street.

Together with traffic analysis, safety and technical requirements, and City policies, your input will support the development of design options for this section of Yellowhead Trail.

We invite you to stay involved as we share design options for your feedback in Phase 2 engagement.

**THANK YOU.**

## WHAT WE HEARD: PHASE 1 AT A GLANCE

No options or design solutions were presented during Phase 1. Instead, the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion program was introduced, and local knowledge and opinions were gathered in response to the planned removal of traffic signals and direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail between St. Albert Trail to 97 Street.

### HOW WE ENGAGED



#### Business Outreach

Businesses in Hagmann Estate Industrial area contacted in-person, door-to-door

**October to November 2019**  
91 businesses



#### Residents' Event

Property owners adjacent to the Yellowhead Trail and 127 Street intersection  
Chateau Nova Kingsway

**November 26, 2019**  
20 participants



#### Stakeholder Meetings

Businesses, organizations, government agencies, and community league executives

**October to December 2019**  
17 meetings



#### Public Engagement Events

Chateau Louis Hotel and Alberta Aviation Museum

**November 28 & 30, 2019**  
128 participants



#### Commercial Property and Business Owners' Event

Chateau Louis Hotel

**November 28, 2019**  
13 participants



#### Survey

Online and paper copies at public events

**November to December 2019**  
157 participants

### What We Heard

The following issues and concerns were voiced most often by engagement participants.

- + Ensure improved traffic flow on Yellowhead Trail is balanced by easy access onto and off of Yellowhead Trail and does not isolate communities located along Yellowhead Trail
- + The existing roadway network is perceived to be at maximum capacity, so people expect congestion and shortcutting to increase in response to the removal of direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail
- + Respondents want the acquisition of properties (business and residential) to be limited and to not negatively impact their sense of community
- + Travel in project area should be accessible for those who walk and cycle and all levels of mobility
- + Entering and exiting Yellowhead Trail can be perceived as challenging or unsafe. Respondents request that access points be easy to navigate and fundamentally safe.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program

In 2011, the City of Edmonton completed and endorsed a strategic plan to convert Yellowhead Trail to a freeway, with three lanes of free-flowing traffic in each direction, and a target speed of 80 km/h.

All current signalized intersections along Yellowhead Trail will be removed and two new interchanges at 127 Street and 121 Street are being explored. Roadway users will exit and enter Yellowhead Trail at the nearest interchange or from a parallel service road.

The City is committed to transforming Yellowhead Trail into a freeway to improve the movement of goods and services within the city and region as traffic volume continues to grow. It will also improve safety at several high-collision locations and the daily commute for thousands of people.

Visit [www.edmonton.ca/yellowheadtrail](http://www.edmonton.ca/yellowheadtrail) for more information on the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program.

### Yellowhead Trail: St. Albert Trail to 97 Street

As part of the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program, the City of Edmonton has launched a concept planning study for Yellowhead Trail between St. Albert Trail and 97 Street.

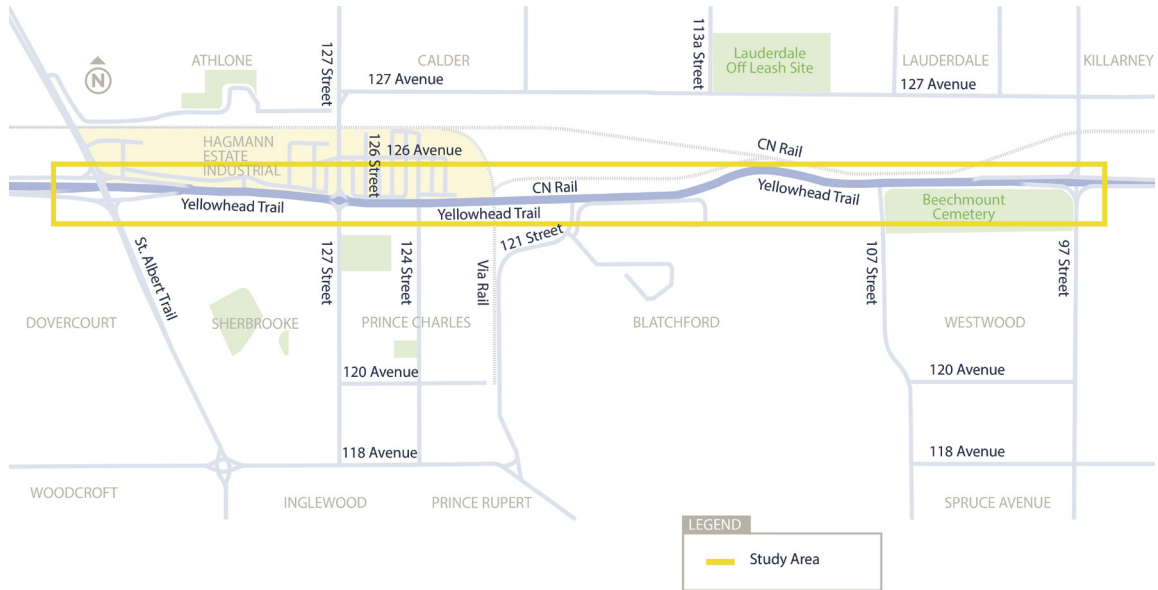
The concept planning study will consider:

- + Removal of traffic signals at 127 Street, 124 Street, 121 Street, and 107 Street
- + Removal of direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail at 130 Street, 126 Street, 124 Street, 107 Street, and CN Rail Walker Yard
- + Addition of interchanges and parallel service roads within the study area.

No decisions regarding the interchanges or roadway design have yet been made. At the end of this study, the City will have a concept plan showing the changes to the roadway network between St. Albert Trail and 97 Street required to accommodate the removal of signalized intersections and closure of direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail. The concept plan will include interchanges, roadways, and land requirements.

Visit [edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street](http://edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street) for more information on the St. Albert Trail to 97 Street planning study.

**FIGURE 1: PROJECT AREA MAP**



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

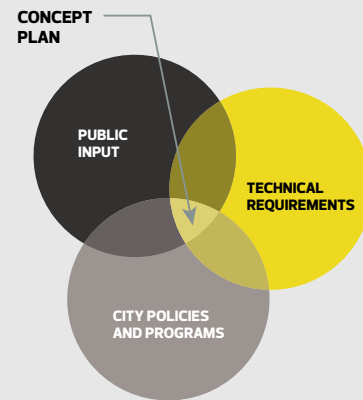
### Public Engagement Philosophy

The City of Edmonton is committed to involving the people affected by the decisions it makes by seeking diverse opinions, experiences, and information so that a wide spectrum of information is available to decision makers.

**FIGURE 2: HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE**

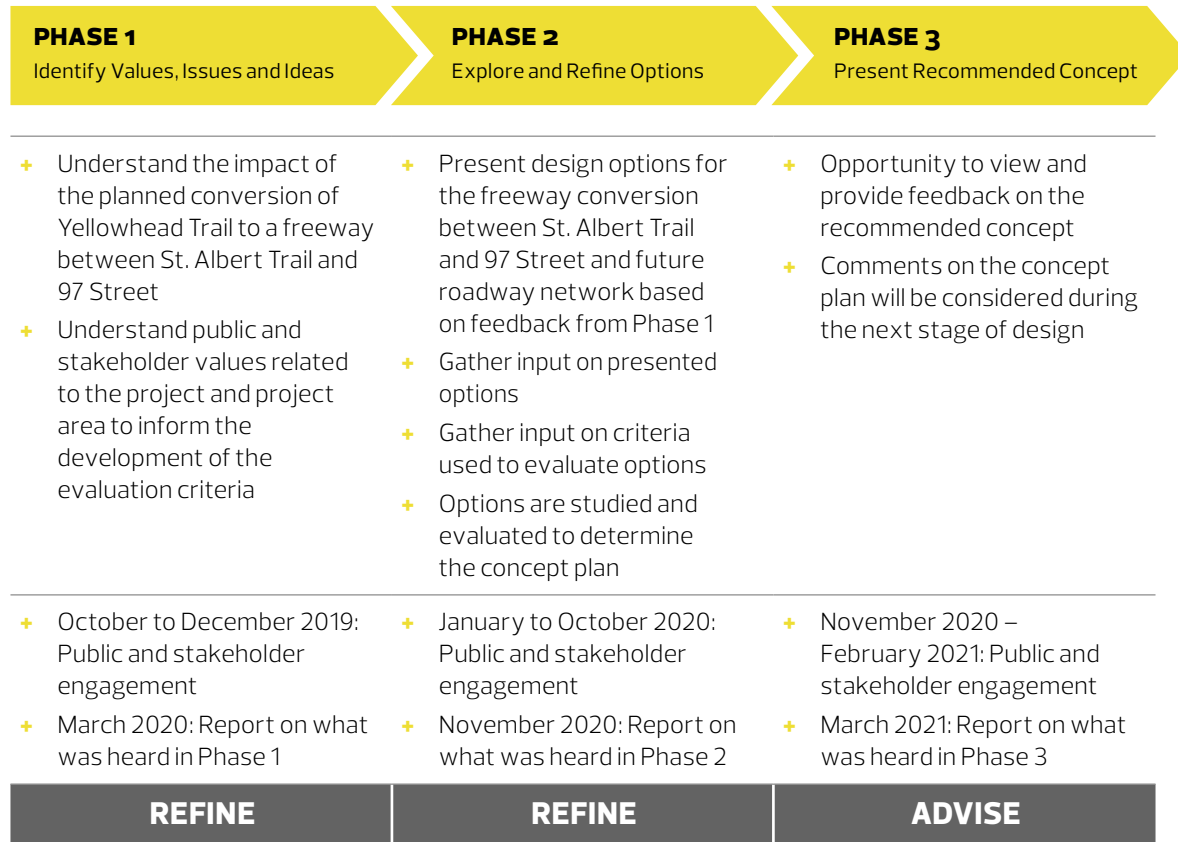
Public input, technical analysis, and City policies will be considered in determining the concept plan.

The City's public engagement spectrum defines the public's level of influence in engagement processes. Visit [edmonton.ca/publicengagement](http://edmonton.ca/publicengagement) for more information on the City's public engagement process.



## Public Engagement Design

A three-phase public engagement process has been designed to create multiple opportunities for the public and stakeholders to provide input to be considered during this concept planning study.



During Phase 1, all engagement opportunities were at the REFINE level on the City's engagement spectrum.

**REFINE**

## PHASE 1: ENGAGEMENT

No options or design solutions were proposed during Phase 1. Instead, the intent was to learn about what's important to the public as the City converts Yellowhead Trail into a freeway and plans for the removal of traffic signals and direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail in the project area.

Phase 1 engagement objectives were to:

- + Understand values related to the project and project area
- + Understand current travel patterns
- + Understand operations of businesses in the project area
- + Explore and understand local knowledge, opinions, and views in response to the removal of traffic signals and direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail between St. Albert Trail and 97 Street.

Public input will be considered in the development of roadway network design options and the evaluation criteria that will be used to evaluate those options.

Design options and the draft evaluation criteria used to evaluate the options will be presented for feedback during the study's second phase of engagement, which will begin in Fall 2020.

## WHAT WE HEARD

The following is a summary of what we heard across all engagement opportunities.

### **Need to Balance Access with Free Flow Traffic**

Input gathered during Phase 1 tends to support improving traffic flow along the Yellowhead Trail corridor. There is also a desire to ensure improved traffic flow is balanced by easy access onto and off of Yellowhead Trail. Similarly, individuals participating in Phase 1 engagement activities want to ensure that the removal of signalized intersections and direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail does not isolate neighborhoods by removing all Yellowhead Trail access points, does not create excessive congestion on the arterial roadways connecting to Yellowhead Trail, and does not interfere with access into and out of neighbourhoods from arterial roadways.

There are differing points of view regarding the preferred location for the development of access points and interchanges along Yellowhead Trail in the project area. However, there are consistent concerns regarding the removal of all access to Yellowhead Trail from 107 Street and its impact on isolating the adjacent community and businesses, increasing congestion on arterial roadways, and encouraging shortcutting through the Westwood neighbourhood.

## Roadway Network at Capacity

The existing roadway network in the study area is perceived to be at maximum capacity:

- + Left turns into and out of communities are very difficult
- + Intersections at St. Albert Trail and 101 Street on 118 Avenue are seen as ineffective at peak travel times, increasing congestion, and negatively impacting traffic flow
- + Congestion issues are expected to increase in response to the removal of signalized intersections and direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail from both the St. Albert Trail to 97 Street project area and in the 156 Street to St. Albert Trail project area to the west.

Participants feel it is important that the concept design planning considers future traffic flow and capacity demand from other projects (e.g., Blatchford, MetroLine LRT) and other access closures included in the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program.

## Shortcutting Concerns

Residents perceive that shortcutting through residential neighbourhoods will increase in response to the removal of signalized intersections and direct accesses to Yellowhead Trail. Shortcutting through neighbourhoods is expected to increase to provide east-west traffic flow that can no longer be accessed via Yellowhead Trail and as a way to avoid increased congestion on the nearby arterial roads.

## Property Acquisition Uncertainty

Residential and commercial property owners and business owners want the acquisition of properties to be limited. Uncertainty about which properties will need to be acquired and the associated timelines is concerning and impacts their ability to make future plans.

In addition to wanting to limit the acquisition of private property, residents want to ensure that property acquisitions do not negatively impact the sense of community in their neighborhood.

## Emergency Response Time Impacts

Engagement participants are concerned about changes to emergency response time as a result of the removal of signalized intersections and direct accesses to Yellowhead and the potential relocation of Edmonton Firestation #8.

## Construction Concerns

Respondents are concerned about the level and intensity of construction impacts as they affect both adjacent neighbourhoods and commuters.



## **Active modes**

Ensuring the project area is accessible for all active modes of transportation and all levels of mobility is important for engagement participants. East-west and north-south travel routes are requested throughout the project area.

Requests are made to separate active transportation modes from vehicle traffic to provide safe travel options, especially on major roadways like Yellowhead Trail, St. Albert Trail, 127 Street, and 97 Street.

Due to the potential distance between north-south connections across Yellowhead Trail, some engagement participants suggest installing additional shared-use path overpasses to increase north-south connections.

## **Merging On and Off Yellowhead**

The process of entering or exiting Yellowhead Trail is perceived by some as challenging, confusing, or unsafe. Engagement participants request that these access points be designed to be easy to navigate and fundamentally safe.

# What Happens Next?

## Phase 2 Engagement

In Phase 2, guided by the Yellowhead Trail Strategic Plan, the project team will consider all input gathered during Phase 1. Together with the outcomes of traffic analysis, safety and technical studies, and City policies, your input will support the development of roadway design options and evaluation criteria to assess those options. Design options and evaluation criteria will be presented for feedback during Phase 2 in Fall 2020.

### BE INFORMED AND GET INVOLVED

Visit [edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street](https://edmonton.ca/YellowheadSATto97Street) to sign up to receive project updates by email.

#### Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program

The Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program, identified in the City's 2019–2022 Capital Budget as a transformational project, will upgrade Yellowhead Trail in order to improve the safety, operational capacity and level of service of this key inter-city, inter-regional and inter-provincial route. The Program is fully funded with a total budget of about \$1 billion committed from all levels of government.

Over the next four years, planning, design, and public engagement on the multiple projects that make up the freeway conversion will continue. In 2019, construction started on roads parallel to Yellowhead Trail and a significant milestone was achieved with the closure of the 89 Street intersection. Major construction on Yellowhead Trail, starting just west of 50 Street to Victoria Trail, will begin in May 2020.

Sign up online to stay informed: [edmonton.ca/YellowheadTrail](https://edmonton.ca/YellowheadTrail).