

103 Avenue Streetscape Project from 100 to 101 Street

WHAT WE HEARD

NOVEMBER 2019

| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton



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WHAT WE HEARD

103 Avenue Streetscape Project
from 100 to 101 Street

November 2019

This is our city.

We value your input on how we maintain, grow
and build Edmonton.

We believe engagement leads to better
decision making.

We are committed to reaching out to our diverse
communities in thoughtful and meaningful ways.

We want to understand your perspectives and
build trusting relationships with you.

We will show you how you help influence
City decisions.

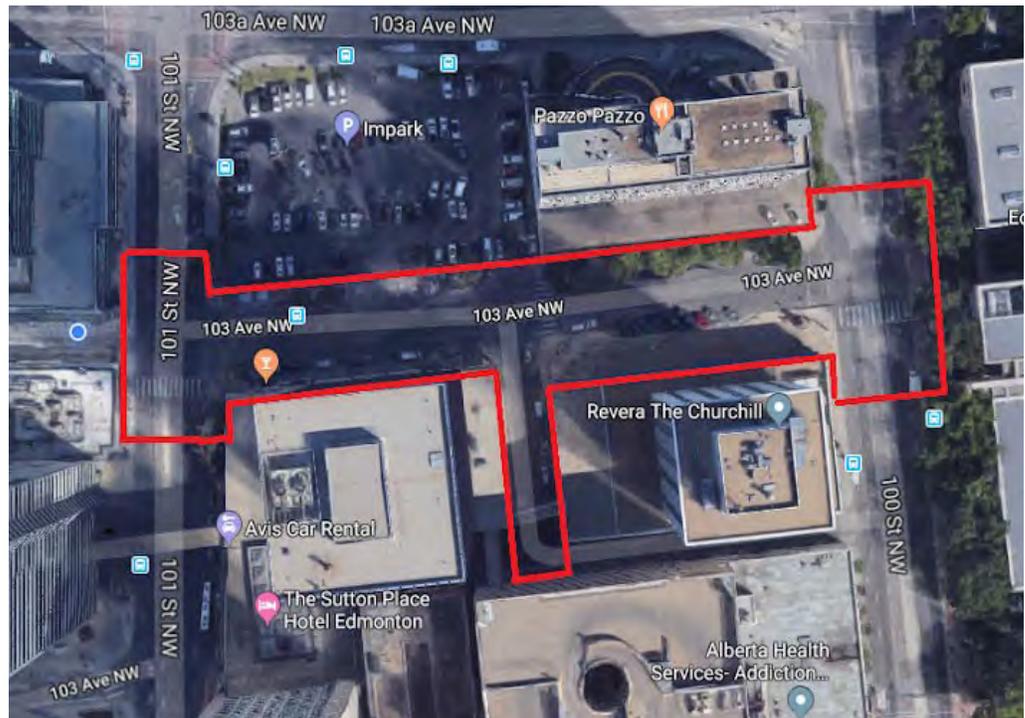
Share your voice with us and shape our city.

Project Overview

103 Avenue links people to two key areas in the life of our city: Ice District and the Civic Precinct.

103 Avenue connects us to the Royal Alberta Museum, Winspear Centre, City Hall, and Stanley A. Milner Public Library—as well as office towers, restaurants, hotels and the Valley Line–South LRT. 103 Avenue also connects hundreds of Edmontonians to their homes.

The 103 Avenue Streetscape project reflects the City's Green and Walkable ideals. Green and Walkable projects make areas more attractive to live, work, and invest in. They also add diversity, vibrancy, and energy to downtown Edmonton. This component of the Capital City Downtown Plan calls for improvements to downtown roadways and streetscapes that support safe and comfortable pedestrian movement, sidewalk vibrancy, quality urban design, and more trees and greenery.



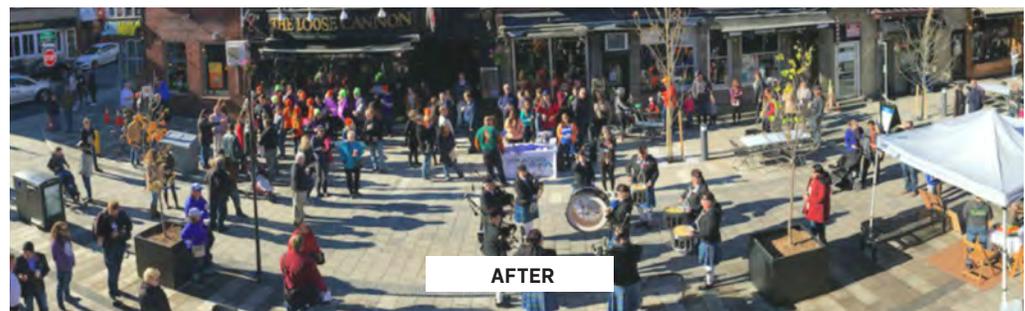
From August to October 2019, Edmontonians shared their ideas and thoughts about the City's vision for 103 Avenue. The vision developed will be used to help the Project Team design a Concept Plan.



The public and stakeholder input will become part of the Concept Plan, which will be available for more input in the winter of 2020.



Halifax, Canada



Halifax, Canada

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER EVENTS

EVENT NAME **103 AVENUE STREETSCAPE PROJECT**
Stakeholder one-on-one interviews

DATE August – November 2019

LOCATION Stakeholder offices and businesses

EVENT NAME **STAKEHOLDER VISIONING WORKSHOP**

DATE September 17, 2019

LOCATION Heritage Room
City Hall

EVENT NAME **PUBLIC DROP-IN EVENT**

DATE September 17, 2019w

LOCATION Edmonton Tower

EVENT NAME **PUBLIC POP-UP EVENT**

DATE September 19, 2019

LOCATION MNP Tower

EVENT NAME **CHURCHILL REVERA SENIORS RESIDENCE WORKSHOP**

DATE September 21, 2019
October 9, 2019

LOCATION Revera Seniors Residence

EVENT NAME **ONLINE SURVEY**

DATE September 17 – October 2

CONTACT INFORMATION

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LEVEL OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



The Project Team's public engagement process honoured the City of Edmonton's commitment to "involv[e] the people affected by the decisions it makes" and "seek diverse opinions, experiences and information so that a wide spectrum of information is available to decision makers."

https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/public-engagement.aspx

Decision makers commit to incorporating stakeholder and public input into the vision and Concept Plan and demonstrate how their input was used. In instances where the Project Team is unable to incorporate the input, decision makers will communicate the constraints that led to the decision.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Public Engagement in the concept phase are to:

1. Introduce the project to the public and stakeholders
2. Build relationships that will last for the duration of the project and after
3. Determine the vision for 103 Avenue Streetscape
4. Determine elements and options in the Concept Plan stage to best reflect that vision

The stakeholder and public engagement events were held to create a vision for the 103 Avenue Streetscape project. The goal is to have 103 Avenue become a green and walkable street, according to the Capital City Downtown Plan. The meaning of "green and walkable" will be determined by the City and adjacent stakeholders, as well as the public.

SUMMARY

Stakeholder and public engagement included stakeholder interviews and workshop, two workshops for residents of Churchill Revera Seniors Residence, a drop-in and a pop-up event for the public, and a public survey online.

Similarities in the responses among the different methodologies point to support for the project, along with some thoughtful insight. Here is a summary of what we heard from all participants:



Wind and cold dark winters are environmental elements that the Concept Plan needs to address. People who suffer from mental illness and addictions are also part of life on the avenue. A compassionate and collaborative approach is needed to assist our most vulnerable citizens.



103 Avenue needs to give people a reason to go and then stay on 103 Avenue—the kind of street that Edmontonians would be proud to showcase to visitors. Features that contribute to the vibe people look for include trees, water, fire, lighting, and public art.



Design for multiuse spaces should accommodate summer and winter patios, events, and activities, as well as give preference to pedestrians. Vehicle traffic will continue to need parkade access as well as offset shifts from on-street parking to short-term stops and drop-off zones.



An investment in 103 Avenue has the potential to become a welcoming space that transforms how visitors approach Churchill Square and Ice District. These two gathering places fill a vital role in Edmonton's cultural and community.

Public Engagement Plan

WHAT WAS DONE

To create a vision for the 103 Avenue Streetscape project, the Project Team sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is your vision for the streetscaping of 103 Avenue?
2. What are your hopes for the avenue?
3. Where are the opportunities and potential?
4. What are your fears and concerns?
5. How can those fears be mitigated?
6. What are the unique attributes of the avenue that will influence the Concept Plan?
7. What are the 3 most important considerations you would like the City to keep in mind?



Revera Retirement Home

The engagement took place from August to November 2019. Participants in the public engagement reflect Edmonton's diverse population. Their participation was encouraged through targeted communications with the seniors' residence and the Mainstreet apartment building, some of whom are foreign students, newcomers to Canada, and lower-income earners. All public events were held in accessible locations.

Communication to promote the public and stakeholder engagement process/ activities included:

1. Personal phone calls, emails, and invitations to stakeholders to attend the Stakeholder Visioning Workshop
2. Information about the drop-in and pop-ups to all stakeholders to pass along to their tenants and residents
3. Posters in store fronts and businesses in the area
4. Electronic screens in elevators throughout the downtown area
5. Street signage in the area

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Project Team met with 98% of identified stakeholders. They held one-on-one or small group discussions with residents and business owners who are passionate about life on 103 Avenue or who would be impacted by the project.

VISIONING WORKSHOP

A Stakeholder Visioning Workshop attracted 14 stakeholder groups that collectively shared their vision for 103 Avenue.

PUBLIC DROP-IN EVENT

A public drop-in event in the lobby of Edmonton Tower attracted more than 86 participants. This number included people from the apartment complex, seniors' residence, surrounding office towers, businesses, those interested in creating a pedestrian oriented streetscape, and citizens who are diligent about offering their perspective on City projects. Facilitators guided people through displays and a large map, sought their opinions by taking notes, writing comments on sticky notes, and encouraging conversations. Child-friendly activities were set up and available, and facilitators were primed to offer special assistance to senior citizens, those new to Canada, and others needing extra assistance.

PUBLIC POP-UP EVENT

The MNP Tower was the site of a busy pop-up during a weekday noon hour in September. Facilitators captured comments on clip boards and sticky notes placed on the display boards and large map. An estimated 90 people visited the Public Engagement event, including residents of 103 Avenue, business owners along 103 Avenue, users of 103 Avenue, office workers, those working at nearby businesses, and Edmontonians passing by.



Public Pop-Up Event

CHURCHILL REVERA SENIORS RESIDENCE WORKSHOPS

Two workshops at the Churchill Revera Seniors Residence, which is located on 103 Avenue, were designed to generate spirited discussion and encourage residents to share their perspectives and help the Project Team learn their specific needs. A facilitator led the workshop. Subject matter experts from the Project Team answered specific questions. A note taker captured the discussion.



Seniors Residence Workshops

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey, aligned with the dates of the in-person drop-in events, had responses from 127 people.

ENGAGEMENT TYPES	EVENT DATES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Stakeholder interviews	August to November, 2019	22
Stakeholder Visioning workshop	September 19, 2019	14
Churchill Revera Seniors workshops	September 21; October 2, 2019	54
Public Drop-in, Edmonton Tower	September 17, 2019	86+
Public Pop-up, MNP Tower	September 19, 2019	90+
Online Survey	September 17 to October 2, 2019	127
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS		393+

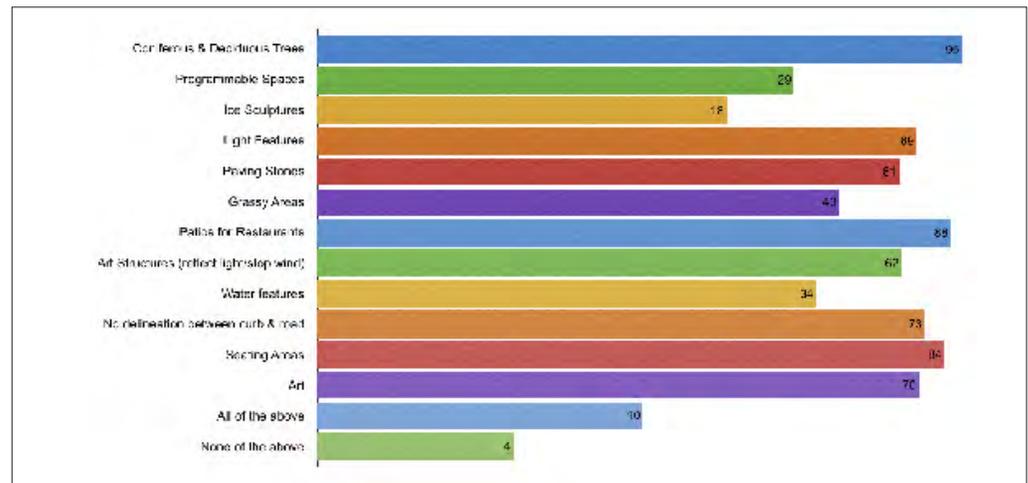
ENGAGEMENT RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Stakeholders and members of the public expressed overwhelming support for the project. All recognized the significance of a vibrant area connecting Ice District and the Civic Precinct. The majority of people felt that the street is cold, uninviting, and in dire need of improvement. Stakeholders and the public offered similar sentiments to the quotes in blue:

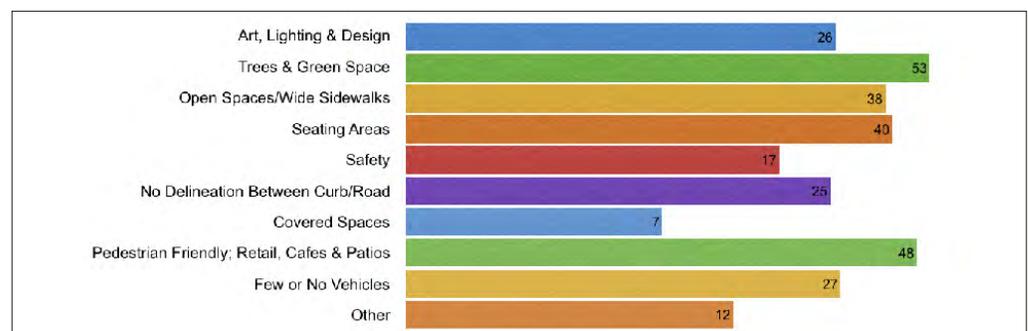
“My favourite streets are the ones I can find joy in. Make it a place I want to bring people.”

PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

The 103 Avenue Streetscape project focuses on enhancing the area between 100 Street and 101 Street. When asked which design elements and features they would like to see incorporated into this section of 103 Avenue, participants indicated the following preferences from a list of design elements provided:

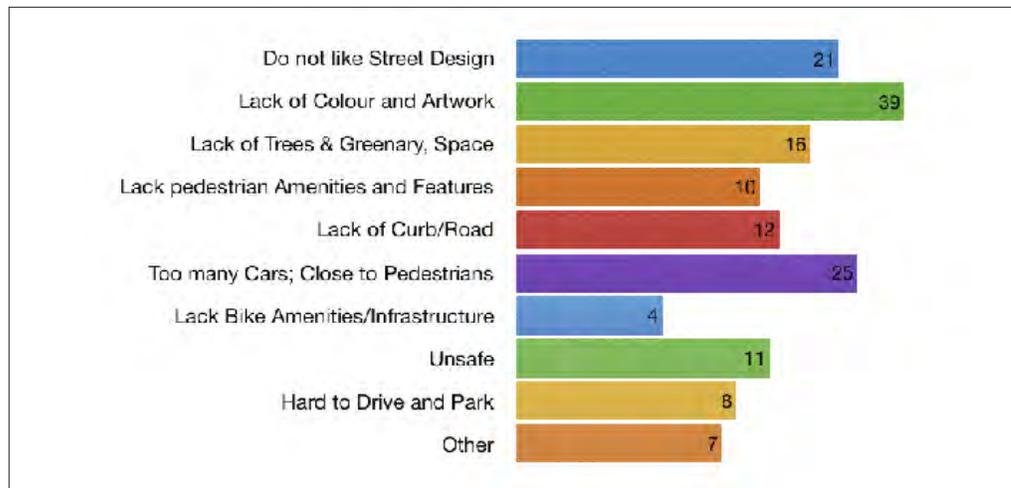


Participants viewed images of walkable streets from around the world and indicated the features they liked, as follows:

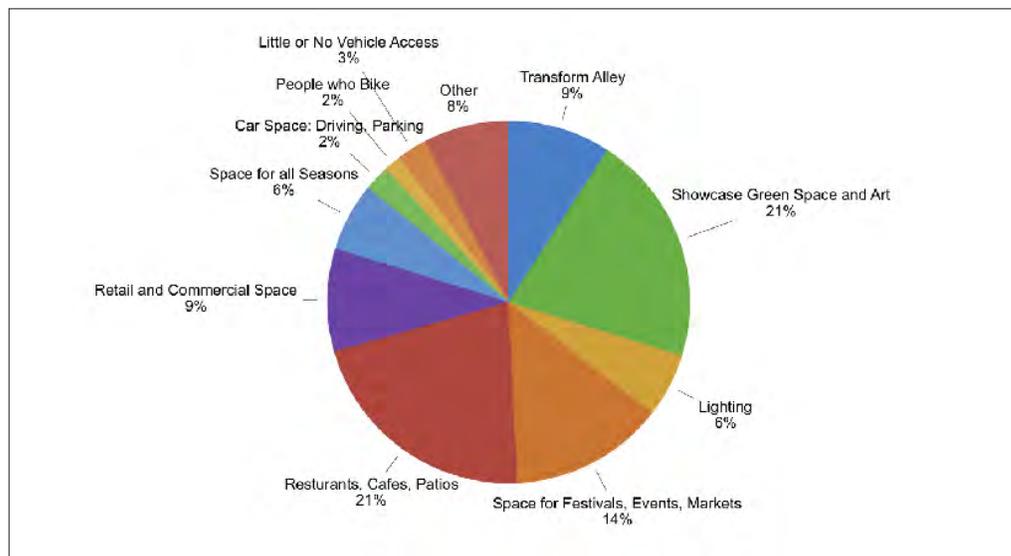




Participants viewed images of walkable streets from around the world and indicated the features they did not like:



Participants indicated how they envision the 103 Avenue space to be used:



Stakeholder Comments

Stakeholders for the 103 Avenue Streetscape project include business owners, property managers, residents, a business association, a community league, subject matter experts and those who live or work on 103 Avenue who are passionate about life on the avenue. They were eager to share their ideas and perspectives.

STAKEHOLDER REACTIONS

The overall reaction from those who owned businesses, managed properties, were subject matter experts in downtown urban design or who lived on 103 Avenue was enthusiastic and supportive.

**“This is a very important street.
It is a key strategic piece for downtown.”**

Stakeholders thought that the project would create a community connection corridor—not just between locations but between people. They hoped that the transformed 103 Avenue would support good community participation, with accountability, responsibility, and pride being shared by tenants, residents, businesses, and visitors.

Stakeholders urged the City to consider the development as a solid investment in creating livable, workable, people-oriented places that would draw people to downtown. An attractive streetscape designed for pedestrians but still accessible to vehicles would cause local businesses to flourish. Amenities could include coffee shops, patios on existing restaurants, pop-ups, winter and summer markets, and food trucks.

**“Create a vibe! Generate liveliness! Make
it so people would WANT to come here.”**

Residents of the Churchill Revera Seniors Residence responded enthusiastically to the thought of a new streetscape. They welcomed the opportunity to add beauty and functionality to a street that currently presents many barriers for them.

**“What a fabulous idea. I like the back-alley effort.
The street is in desperate need of improvement.”**

STAKEHOLDER IDEAS

Stakeholders offered several ideas on what the Project Team should consider. They identified that the street has unique features. For example, it can be extremely windy; in winter, it is typically dark after 4 p.m. Their ideas included:

1. Conduct a wind study and incorporate wind mitigation measures.
2. Plan for enjoying the street in winter, through winter design, lighting, winter patios, fire features, greenery, with an emphasis on coniferous trees.
3. Attract birds to the avenue through trees and landscaping.
4. Make the roadway an extension of (or similar) the alley between the Bell Tower and Edmonton Tower.
5. Paving should be at one level and focus on pedestrian needs. This will also make the street more attractive and accessible for those with mobility difficulties.
6. Include artwork that can potentially be used to reflect light and brighten the street.
7. Avoid curbs and steps that interfere with accessibility
8. Incorporate a play structure or area for children at daycares or families with children to gather.
9. Add trees, planters, and landscaping for a welcoming dimension to the street.
10. Have retail space that attracts people, like an ice cream shop or coffee spot. Pipe in music to create a celebratory atmosphere.
11. Design the area to be programmable. Animate the street through spillover from festivals in Churchill Square, food trucks, a winter market, yoga and tai chi, and other activities that could take place.
12. Create beauty through tapping into the elements (fire, water and ice), plantings, and art. Make it a place that people will gather.



Wind trees



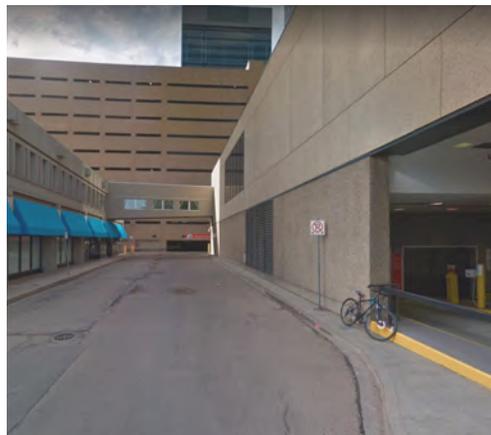
Outdoor festivals

STAKEHOLDER CAUTIONS

Stakeholders appreciated that the main purpose of the streetscape was to create a more pleasant pedestrian experience and make spending time on 103 Avenue enjoyable for everyone. When asked “what cautions should we be aware of,” they had three primary cautions: parking, safety, and assured quality.

Parking

1. Maintain access to parkades for office towers, the Sutton Hotel, and residents of the Mainstreet Tower. While all agreed that traffic could be minimized, the stakeholders stressed that the street needs to be accessible for employees and clients of the office towers and businesses.
2. Residents of Churchill Revera as well as other stakeholders felt that angle parking in front of the Churchill residence is dangerous and not conducive to a streetscape with a pedestrian focus. Stakeholders suggested replacing angle parking in front of the Churchill with a drop-off zone to accommodate the activity bus, DATS, taxis, emergency services, and family member drop-off for residents of the seniors' complex.
3. Maintain parking in front of small businesses. This preference was shared by almost all stakeholders. The small businesses on the north side of the street depend on customers parking in front to drop off and pick up merchandise. The business owners indicated that customers would not go to the parking lot on the corner of 103 Avenue and 101 Street, nor to a parkade, if all they needed was to drop off or pick up an item.
4. Eliminate parallel parking directly in front of the parking lot, across from the Rose and Crown; event and tour busses could be assigned those locations.



Current back alley



Transformed back alley

“We have to watch out for those small businesses. They’ve been here a long time.”



Transformed back alley



Transformed back alley

SAFETY

1. The street is isolated and dark. Stakeholders report that this, combined with the design of office towers, storefronts and the open parking lot, attracts vulnerable populations. The stakeholders expressed empathy and want to find ways to collaborate with social agencies to assist the vulnerable population and minimize social disorder.

“As downtown businesses we need to collaborate to alleviate social disorder. Good design can help: well lit, well used, and well designed. But these problems can’t be solved through design alone. It’s up to all of us to find solutions.”

2. The winds, uneven sidewalk surfaces, high curbs, and steep ramps make movement difficult for the frail and those with mobility issues. Business owners shared several examples of rescuing citizens who had been knocked down by the wind. Residents of the Churchill Revera resort to using the pedway system but would prefer to walk outside.

Assured Quality: “Good enough isn't good enough.”

Stakeholders understood that the City’s Concept Plan must navigate several layers of approval from various departments before a project can come to fruition. Stakeholders urged the Project Team to hold fast to the vision being expressed and develop a Concept Plan that touches the hearts and minds of Edmontonians.

“Sometimes the City errs on the side of ‘it’s good enough.’ That can’t happen here. We must fully realize the potential and promise of 103 Avenue. We need to plan for outstanding results.”

Although eager to participate in the visioning process, stakeholders expressed concern that the compelling and exciting vision would ultimately be watered down. Several stakeholders cited the Downtown Streetscape Design Manual, indicating that it offers only 3 or 4 options for lights, seating, paving stones, etc.

“Why are we being asked to dream if the City catalogue imposes restrictions?”

“The City promises big visions. But they don’t deliver in the end.”

ADVICE FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders were invited to provide advice to the Project Team. Here are some of their words of advice:

1. Dream BIG! This is the link that will tie everything together.
2. Think of this not as capital spending but rather as capital investment.
3. If we do this right, you will see the private sector seize this as an opportunity.
4. Play on the heritage aspect. This street used to be a significant part of Edmonton. What can we draw on from the past to make it just as significant today?
5. Pursue the alley redesign—it is creative and edgy. Take risks! Don't forget about the loading zone in the back alley. Update but don't hinder the loading zone.
6. Concern about the long-time businesses here; offer something to help during construction.
7. Get rid of the City of Edmonton Development Appeal Board Offices; put them in Edmonton Tower. They are sitting on an important piece of future retail property.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Participants from the drop-in and pop-up session were excited by the prospect of turning 103 Avenue into an inviting and comfortable gathering space, complete with new patios, seating spaces, public art, programming, and improved walkability.

OVERALL REACTIONS

Making the area more walkable, connected, and pedestrian friendly, as well as making it a welcoming gathering space were key pieces to what the public was looking for in design considerations. There was wide support for art of all kinds, as well as encouragement to add unique design elements such as lighting options, fire features in winter, and programming for the space.

1. Participants were particularly interested in re-imagining 103 Avenue as a gathering space, with improved seating, patios, trees, greenery, and programmable areas.
2. Revitalizing the alley resonated with participants and added a “cool factor” to the area.
3. People were very interested in making 103 Avenue more pedestrian friendly, with several suggestions such as limiting vehicle traffic and expanding walkways.

IDEAS

1. Elemental features such as water, fire, trees, or grass were very popular, though there were mixed feelings about water features due to the proximity to City Hall and its own large water feature.
2. There was significant support for public art; people thought that art could have a functional role, such as seating, or a play structure for children.
3. The City was challenged to be creative and take risks on the unique nature of the space.
4. Dreaming big dreams plus longevity of features is important.

“Don’t restrict yourself; just think of something that is timeless that we can still have in place in 50 years.”

Cautions

Members of the public expressed several cautions.

SAFETY

1. Safety was the number one priority for people at the drop-in and pop-up sessions. They wanted an area that was safe from crime and was designed for pedestrian safety.
2. Participants feel that the street is currently not safe. There is apprehension about the perceived increase in social disorder that is gravitating toward 103 Avenue.
3. Pedestrian safety and accessibility concerns, especially for the elderly living in the area, were a top priority for participants. No curbs, little or no delineation between sidewalks and roadways, slower traffic, and managing the traffic lights and pedestrian crossings at 100 Street and 101 Street were all seen as ways to reduce the risks to pedestrians.

WIND

1. Almost all participants noted that wind was a deterrent to using the street and made the street very unpleasant.
2. Wind mitigation was a key factor when improving the look and feel of 103 Avenue. People thought that any improvements to the street would be in vain if the wind remained at the same level as it is presently.
3. Comments relating to protection from wind also tied into protection from other elements such as sun, shade and snow; the space must be designed to be appealing in all four seasons.

PARKING

1. Parking drew lively conversation from participants. People wanted to eliminate on-street parallel parking in the area in front of the parking lot on 103 Avenue and 101 Street (across from Rose and Crown). They wanted to keep some angle parking in front of small businesses and eliminate angle parking in front of the Churchill Revera. They also wanted continued access to parkades.
2. There was a negative reaction towards the parking lot on 103 Avenue and 101 Street. Overcrowding of spaces, truck boxes hanging over the parking property and blocking the sidewalks, and general poor condition of the lot drew criticism from the public.

3. “The parking lot is an eyesore, so having pieces that interact with the parking lot to make it nice is important. We need to make that corner something special, even if it holds a parking lot.”

Advice

The excitement that people felt about the project motivated them to provide good advice for the Project Team to consider when designing the Concept Plan.

1. Take advantage of the adjacent alley to creatively work with art, lighting and potential retail space.
2. Make it all about accessibility, especially for pedestrians, seniors, families, and those with mobility issues.
3. Design for winter! Make the street as appealing in winter as it will be in summer.

Conclusion: 103 AVENUE Consistent Suggestions

The responses—from stakeholders who live, work, and play on the avenue and from the public who use the avenue—were similar. There was a common desire for a friendly and welcoming street. The most common ideas included:

1. **Wind mitigation:** Unless the wind can be managed, any attempts to beautify and increase the comfort of the street will be in vain.
2. **Level walking and driving surface:** No delineation between curbs, sidewalks or roadway was encouraged.
3. **Planting and trees:** Adding life to the avenue through trees and greenery was emphasized. Trees that attract birds would be welcome.
4. **Personality and sense of place:** Create a space that has its own vibe, where people will want to linger, and visit. Use art, welcoming seating areas to add personality to the street.
5. **Parking:** Parking generated a great deal of discussion. Office towers and the hotel need continued access to parking for clients, patients, customers, office workers, and guests. A parking or drop-off solution is important for the small businesses on the north side of 103 Avenue.

AS A RESULT, WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE PROJECT?

At the vision stage of the project, the City was gathering information with no preconceived outcomes; the perspectives of the stakeholders and public will be used to develop the Concept Plan.

The overwhelming emphasis on the wind on 103 Avenue led the Project Team to commission a study on the impact of wind, as well as explore structural solutions to mitigate the wind. The team is researching what communities around the world are doing to alleviate the effect of wind on a pedestrian friendly street.

WHAT'S NEXT

The next step in the 103 Avenue Streetscape project is to integrate the input from stakeholders and the public into the draft Concept Plan along with technical studies. The Concept Plan will be shared with stakeholders and members of the public for their input and perspective.

Citizens can continue to be involved with 103 Avenue Streetscape Project by:

1. Participating in upcoming stakeholder meetings and public engagement events in winter 2020.
2. Visiting the project website for news and regular updates edmonton.ca/103Avenue

Thank you for participating in sharing your voice and shaping our city.

For more information on City of Edmonton public engagement, please visit www.edmonton.ca/publicengagement

