



# Highlands Neighbourhood Renewal

Edmonton

# URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

January 2019

# Executive Summary

The City of Edmonton's Building Great Neighbourhoods and Open Spaces (BGN & OS) branch is planning Neighbourhood Renewal construction for Highlands beginning in 2019 and ending in 2021. Before construction begins, an Urban Design Analysis is (UDA) completed, which informs the preliminary and detailed designs. The analysis and designs are a reflection of City policies, technical requirements and public input.

The neighbourhood renewal upgrades could include:

- Connections that help you walk, bike and move around your neighbourhood
- Improvements to green spaces and parks
- Measures to reduce speeding and short-cutting
- Other infrastructure needs identified by the community to improve livability

## Overview

Highlands began its development as a residential area in 1908 in north-east Edmonton. Since then, Highlands has experienced various stages of development. Many historic buildings help to preserve the unique historical or architectural character in the neighbourhood. Magrath Mansion, Holgate residence and Marshall McLuhan residence are a few prominent properties that maintain ties to the early development. The community is composed primarily of single-family houses, with many long term residents, indicating a general satisfaction with Highlands living.

Ada Boulevard is a prominent roadway on the south edge of the neighbourhood, which plays multiple roles as a roadway for people who drive, bike, and walk with connections to the North Saskatchewan River Valley and multiple park spaces along the road.

Typical residential streets in the neighbourhood have 1.5m concrete sidewalks, are lined with mature trees and lack curb ramps at intersections. Resident feedback and City policy supports replacing 1.5m sidewalks with wider sidewalks where possible. As part of the Neighbourhood Renewal, curb ramps will be added to improve universal accessibility at intersections. There are several missing sidewalk connections in the neighbourhood that are recommended to be added, along with raised crosswalks and curb extensions.

The City of Edmonton has conducted a comprehensive series of public engagement events for this neighbourhood renewal since January 2018, which included a community meeting focused on Ada Boulevard, a stakeholder workshop, two in-person public workshops, an on-line and hard copy survey, and two drop-in workshops at Henry Martell Park. The input received through all public engagement activities is used in conjunction with City policies and technical considerations to inform the concepts for this Neighbourhood Renewal project.

As presented in the associated "What We Heard" report, a Vision statement and Important Elements were identified and refined by residents and stakeholders to help guide the renewal efforts for their neighbourhood streets and public open spaces.

## Vision

*Highlands is a safe, friendly, and highly-connected neighbourhood. It is an active and accessible destination, where people enjoy modern infrastructure and beautiful gathering spaces surrounded by local history.*

The Vision defines what the City is working to achieve through Neighbourhood Renewal and the set of Important Elements are objectives that contribute to achieving that Vision. The project takes into account the physical condition, historical context, safety, functionality and recreation requirements identified through the public engagement process.



## Residential Road Renewal

Potential improvements to residential roads to improve walking, biking, and accessibility to slow traffic and discourage short-cutting include:

- Curb extensions at several intersections
- Raised crosswalks at intersections to replace speed bumps along Ada Boulevard
- The addition of a roundabout at 60 Street and 111 Avenue
- Adding curb ramps at intersections and new street lights along the streets
- Widening of existing sidewalks to 1.8m where feasible
- Adding missing sidewalk links as site conditions allow

## Bike Facility Road Renewal

There are two types of facilities considered for priority bike routes; shared use path and on-street bike boulevard. Due to low traffic levels and speeds in the neighbourhood along with avoiding disruption to mature trees, the on-street bike boulevard is suggested as most appropriate for Highlands.

### Proposed Bike Routes

There are two north/south bike routes proposed between Ada Boulevard and 118 Avenue on 64/65 Street and 55 Street, and an additional east/west bike route on 113 Avenue.

The bike route on 64/65 Street would connect Ada Boulevard at Henry Martell Park up to the retail stores on 112 Avenue. There is a signalized pedestrian crossing on the east side of the intersection at 112 Avenue that could be used by bikes to cross the busy roadway. The route would transition to 64 Street and continue north to an existing pedestrian crossing on 118 Avenue and connects to an existing bike route that continues north on 64 Street.

The 55 Street bike route would connect bikes between Ada Boulevard and 118 Avenue and past the existing Mount Royal School and Gaby Haas Park.

A bike route on 113 Avenue would provide an east/west route to avoid busy vehicle traffic and intersections on 112 Avenue. This route also provides access to the community league, Highlands Park, Buttercup Farm Park, and would connect to the Mount Royal School site.

## Ada Boulevard

Ada Boulevard is a prominent roadway in the City with views of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and it currently functions as a shared space for people who drive, walk and bike without sidewalks. Design concepts are provided based on existing constraints, City policies and resident feedback. The concepts are as follows:

- 1 **A Woonerf (shared road)** is a Dutch planning concept, which gives the pedestrian priority on the street with vehicles acting as a secondary mode of transportation. The proposed design adds public amenities and slows traffic movement to allow for safe shared use. Raised planter boxes and seating areas direct vehicle traffic and define on-street parking opportunities. The Woonerf would have one-way traffic and be limited to a portion of Ada Boulevard due to the disruption to vehicle traffic and extra material cost to street improvements.

- 2 **A shared use path** along the south side of Ada Boulevard moves bikes and pedestrians off of the street and provides a wide path for shared travel. The existing road width along Ada is between 8.5m to 9.5m and therefore may require additional width at certain locations to create the path. The extra width could be created by shifting the road to the north or by projecting the path over the top-of-bank by building a boardwalk structure. Parallel parking will be maintained where possible on the north side of the Boulevard.
- 3 **A monolithic sidewalk** along the south side of the road that measures 1.8m wide would keep bikes on the road and pedestrians on a grade separated walkway. Curb ramps would be provided at intersections, but universal accessibility would be a challenge without sidewalks in front of the houses.
- 4 **A demarcated path on the road** would provide coloured pavement at the same grade as the roadway to differentiate areas for walking and biking from areas for cars. This concept maintains the existing road width, but space would be limited for on-street parking. Bollards could be considered to provide physical separation of cars and pedestrians.

## City-Owned Outdoor Spaces

Along with the public streets, Highlands contains several parks and open spaces throughout the neighbourhood. The common elements of the concept designs include increased accessibility, improved public amenities, reflection of neighbourhood character and history and placemaking.

The cost for the open space concept designs must fall within the renewal budget for the neighbourhood to be approved for construction. Some elements proposed may not receive funding, however efforts will be made to partner with other City programs, community partners, and initiatives to leverage additional funding opportunities. Within this UDA there are concepts for:

- 1 **Buttercup Farm Park** is a triangular-shaped park located between 58 Street and 60 Street and between 113 and 112 Avenue. The concept includes walkways, planting and public art to improve accessibility, aesthetics and to reflect history.
- 2 **Trolley Turnaround** is an open space formerly used as a turnaround for street trolleys located on the southeast corner of the 61 Street and 112 Avenue intersections. This space is currently underutilized and could provide an additional open space for the neighbourhood or could be redeveloped into a City asset.
- 3 **Henry Martell Park** is used for neighbourhood events and as a passive open space. The concept proposes to improve universal accessibility and add amenities, while maintaining its mature trees and open areas.
- 4 **Lookout Park at 52 Street** is located between 51 and 52 Street overlooking the river valley on the south side of Ada Boulevard. The design proposes to include a manufactured boulder play structure, which would allow users to reach a height to look over the natural trees to the river valley below.
- 5 **111 Avenue/60 Street Intersection** contains a triangular shaped open space with a bench. The proposed design concept for this space includes a mini roundabout at the intersection, as well as adding walkways and seating to create an inviting space.

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# 1 Background Information and Policy Review

**Photo Above**  
One of the many historical/  
character homes in the Highlands  
neighbourhood.

## 1.1 Neighbourhood Renewal Introduction

The Urban Design Analysis (UDA) for Highlands Neighbourhood is a part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Program which is lead by the Building Great Neighbourhoods and Open Spaces (BGN & OS) by the City of Edmonton. The City of Edmonton created the Branch not only to refresh aging neighbourhood infrastructure, but to use renewal as an opportunity to increase vibrancy and sustainability in the neighbourhood. The Branch takes a holistic and integrated City of Edmonton approach to make changes beyond infrastructure improvements, working in partnership with neighbourhoods to develop a vision of the renewed state that considers the special flavour of the neighbourhood alongside the necessary City of Edmonton renewal requirements.

Every year, this program identifies Edmonton neighbourhoods that need renewal and delineates a cost-effective, long-term strategic approach. Following comprehensive public engagement and infrastructure analysis, the City will proceed with reconstruction and repaving of roads, renovation of sidewalks, sidewalk connections, streetlights, curbs and gutters in mature neighbourhoods. The City will also explore opportunities for the redevelopment of City-owned green spaces and parks within the neighbourhood. Alleys and arterial roads are not part of the project scope. The streets and open spaces subject to this UDA are shown on **MAP 1 – Study Area**.

The purpose of this UDA report is to inform the designs for neighbourhood renewal. Through public engagement, along with technical and policy considerations, the UDA investigates the existing urban environment, its functionality, connectivity, aesthetics and the overall urban experiences within the neighbourhood. The analysis looks at elements required to renew the neighbourhood's infrastructure, and considers how people live, work, and visit in them. This report will inform City Staff and community members about the neighbourhood characteristics and identifies ways that infrastructure improvements can benefit the community. This report does not reflect the final designs and decisions made for the neighbourhood renewal.



MAP 1 – Study Area





## 1.2 Neighbourhood Context

Highlands is a residential neighbourhood in north-east Edmonton, Alberta. The neighbourhood is bounded by 118 Avenue on the north, Ada Boulevard on the south, 50 Street on the east, and 67 Street on the west. Ada Boulevard has its own historical significance, and plays multiple roles as a roadway for vehicles, a bike route, and a walking/running route, and provides connections to the Edmonton River Valley. There is an existing bike route on 64 Street north of the neighbourhood.

Adjacent to this neighbourhood, are Bellevue on the west, Montrose and Newton on the north and Beverly Heights on the east. Rapid north/south connections are provided by Wayne Gretzky Drive (formerly called Capilano Drive), with an interchange located just west of Highlands on 112 Avenue. North access to Yellowhead Drive is provided via 66 Street and 50 Street. Primary east/west access is by 112 Avenue and 118 Avenue.

The interior of the neighbourhood is composed primarily of single-family dwellings with a few low-density walk-up apartments, in addition to a few commercial businesses and urban services (**MAP 3 – Urban Form & Land Use**). The perimeter of the neighbourhood has active and busy traffic routes, in contrast with the interior residential streets that include large lots, large trees and beautiful river views. Some commercial developments exist along 118 Avenue west of 64 Street, and a small commercial node consisting of boutique shops and restaurants exists at the intersection of 65 Street and 112 Avenue. The neighbourhood is partially affected by the Montrose/Santa Rose Area Redevelopment Plan, which applies to the CB1, CSC & RA7 zoned areas developed along the south of 118 Avenue and 67 Street. Collector roads are the segment of 66 Street between 112 Avenue and 118 Avenue along with a portion of 53 Street lying between 112 Avenue and 118 Avenue.

Some notable services, businesses and organizations in the neighbourhood include Edmonton Fire Station #7, Mount Royal Elementary School, Highlands Junior High School, Highlands Place Senior's Residence, Highlands Baptist Church, Highlands United Church, Highlands Golf Club, and Highlands Lawn Bowling Club. The Highlands Library is located at the northeast corner of the neighbourhood at 67 Street across 118 Avenue. East Glen High School is located to the west in Bellevue neighbourhood.

With its proximity to the LRT line, Northlands Park, Edmonton EXPO Centre and Concordia University of Edmonton, Highlands has access to a number of large public facilities and services.

The neighbourhood has an active community league, which organizes community events and facilities for all ages, such as League Walk, the community garden, a spray park, bridge club and many others. The historic Gibbard Block, located at 6427 112 Avenue, is under redevelopment as of January 2019. A non-profit organization named Highlands Historical Society is dedicated to the preservation of the architectural resources and cultural history of the community since 1988. The decorative plaque program, a joint initiative with the City, enables Highlands residents, having a home 50 years or older, to apply for a plaque describing the history of their home.

Some projects currently underway include:

- 112 Avenue – 118 Avenue Noise Wall Rehabilitation in 2019
- 112 Avenue Rehabilitation (68 Street – 75 Street) Construction scheduled for 2020
- Neighbourhood utility construction
- Highlands Community League's Facility Renewal Development
- Highlands School Expansion
- Future closure of Mount Royal School
- Bellevue/Virgina Park Neighbourhood Renewal to the west

There are some streets excluded from the project scope:

- 112 Avenue (recently renewed) and 118 Avenue
- 50 Street (recently renewed) & 67 Street (part of Bellevue renewal)
- Alleys

The UDA excludes these streets from the specific analysis, but they are considered in the context of connectivity for the urban renewal of roadways and open spaces in Highlands.

## 1.3 Demographics



The Highlands community is comprised of mainly single-family houses, amounting to 89.3% of total building types in the neighbourhood. The remainder of the residential housing includes a mix of semi-detached, row housing, low-rise apartments up to 4 storeys, commercial/institutional and a senior's centre. Some defining characteristics of the neighbourhood are its historical buildings, low density building forms, River Valley access, and two schools. These characteristics may contribute to the following trends inferred from the neighbourhood demographics in the 2016 Municipal Census. **(FIGURE 1 – Highlands Neighbourhood Profile)**

The 2016 census statistics show a higher proportion of residents aged 35 to 64 accounting for 45.1% of the population, with 64.6% of residents having lived in the neighbourhood for more than five years. Comparatively, the City-wide average is 40.3% aged 35 to 64, and 53.1% with more than 5 years residency. Further, the seniors population of 20.6% is high compared to City-wide, which is 14%. This may be due to a seniors residence in the community and a higher percentage of retired residents, 21.9%, as compared to 15.5% City-wide. Overall, Highlands is a mature neighbourhood with a more mature population when compared to other neighbourhoods in the City.

Highlands has a very high percentage of home ownership, 75.2%, as compared to rental, 24.8%, which is mostly located along 118 Avenue. The high percentage of home ownership likely correlates with the higher percentage of more than five years of residency compared to City-wide. The lower percentage of rental property may be due to the predominantly low density residential form and high value of housing. The longer term of residence within Highlands indicates a general satisfaction with living conditions and may contribute to overall stewardship and upkeep of the community.

For mobility, Highlands residents have a higher proportion of residents who commute using bikes at 2.9% as compared to 1.1% bike-based commuters City-wide. On the contrary, the transit and walking commuters at 11.7% and 2.9% are less when compared to the City-wide at 13.7% and 3.8%.

The unemployment rate in Highlands is 4.7%, which is lower compared to 5.6% City-wide. The student population at 19.3% is significantly lower compared to 25.2% City-wide, and is likely due to the lower percentage of the 5–19 age population.

In general, the demographic statistics from the 2016 census indicate a neighbourhood where residents have chosen to own their homes and have been happy to remain for a long period of time.

**Photo Above**  
Highlandia Festival  
(highlandiafest.com)



FIGURE 1 – Highlands Neighbourhood Profile

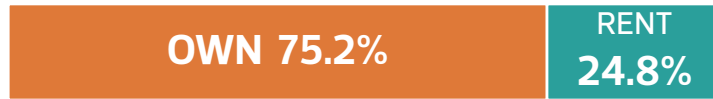
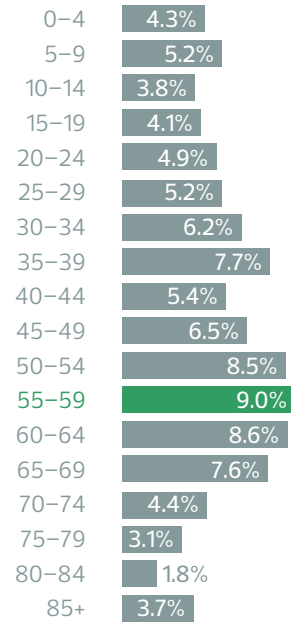
## POPULATION

# 2,545

Source: 2016 Municipal Census

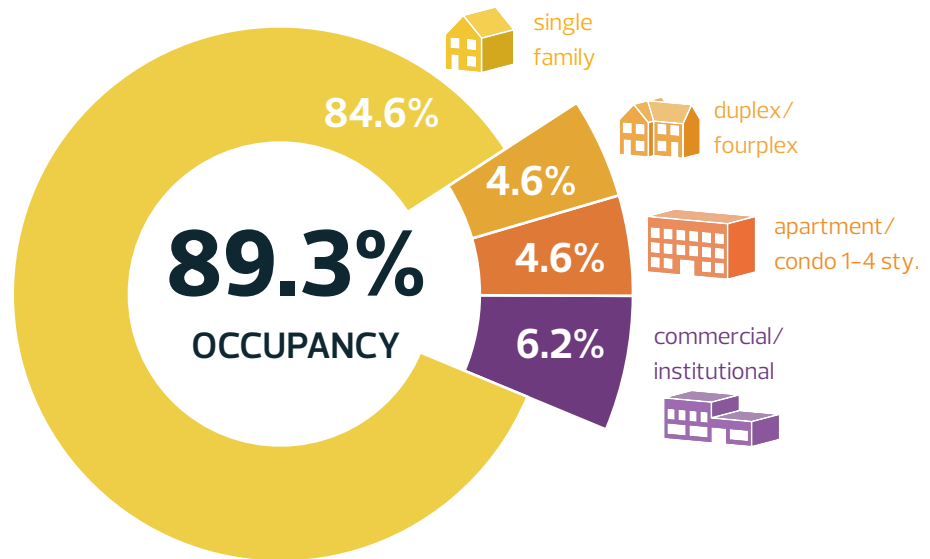
## AGE RANGE

83.0% pop. reported



**OWNERSHIP**  
94.5% pop. reported

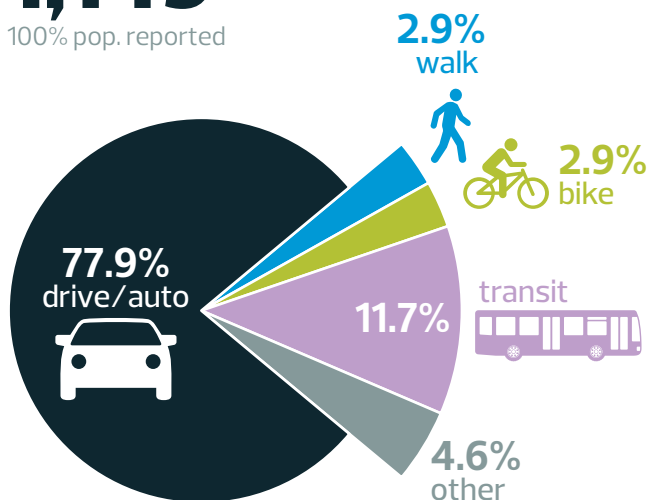
## BUILDING TYPE



## COMMUTERS

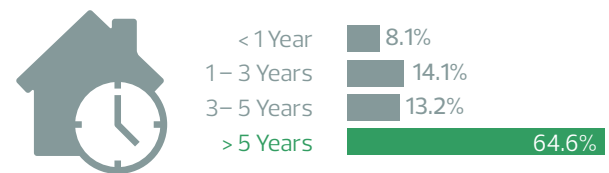
# 1,149

100% pop. reported



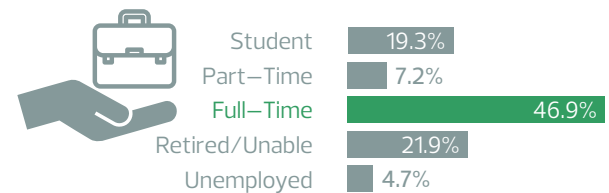
## LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

79.2% pop. reported

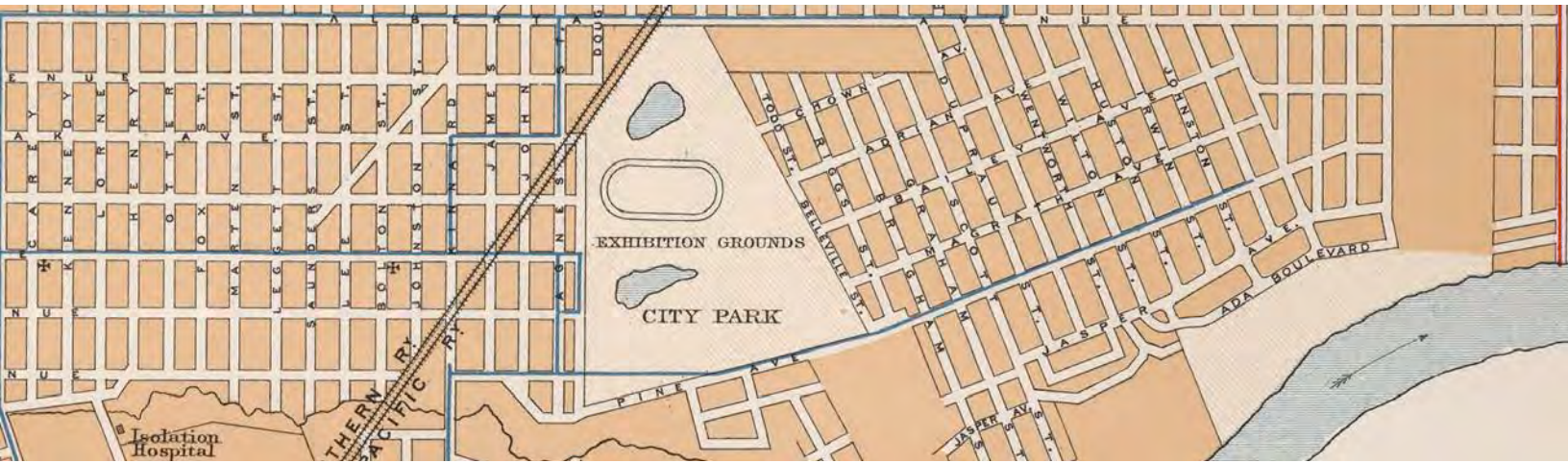


## EMPLOYMENT

73.2% pop. reported



# 1.4 Neighbourhood History



The following section includes excerpts about notable buildings and people from the neighbourhood's history. The source of the information is listed with each excerpt. The historical review helps to establish the character of the neighbourhood to be reflected in the urban design recommendations.

James Gullion and George Gullion took up the first river lot down street from Fort Edmonton. The Gullion brothers would sell River Lots 32 and 34 to John A. McDougall in 1898. These river lots were the core of what would become Highlands 12 years later. In 1910, Magrath, Holgate & Co. purchased 278 acres of land called McDougall, located just east of Bellevue subdivision and it was purchased from John A. McDougall. The purpose of the purchase was the creation of a residential neighbourhood to be subdivided into 66 foot lots. This district was briefly known as McDougall Heights. The new Magrath Company offered \$50 in gold in a contest to suggest a name for their new subdivision on a newspaper. The newspaper stated, *'A charming feature of the subdivision is the elevation, rising several feet above the city level, as it affords the surprising view that cannot be equal in and around the province.'* The company needed a name to attract new residents to high-class residential development. *'The Highlands'* became the official name for new subdivision 21st September 1910, which was suggested by S. Loughlin.

[source: My Heart's in the Highlands – the Building of a Historic Edmonton Community].

Highlands had several boundary changes over the years before finally establishing the current boundary. While the north and south boundaries of Highlands remained the same, its eastern boundary changed from 55 Street to 50 Street, and western boundary changed from 64 to 67 Street by incorporation of the Bellevue neighbourhood.

The following are the names and addresses of the historically preserved residences of the early 1900s:

- Magrath Mansion** (1912), 6240 Ada Boulevard
- Morehouse Residence** (1912), 11153 64 Street
- Buttercup Farmhouse** (1912), 11243 58 Street
- Humphrey Residence** (1912), 11142 62 Street
- McLuhan Residence** (1912), 11342 64 Street
- Grierson/Rees Residence** (1912), 6124 111 Avenue
- Ward Residence** (1912), 11125 60 Street
- Margaret Marshall Residence** (1914), 11119 62 Street
- Owen Residence** (1912), 11227 63 Street
- Sheldon Residence** (1914), 6018 111 Avenue
- Holgate Residence** (1912), 6210 Ada Boulevard
- Ash Residence** (1912), 6256 Ada Boulevard
- Chown Residence** (1912), 11141 62 Street

Image Above  
Edmonton Atlas (Dept. of Interior, J.E. Chalfour 1915)

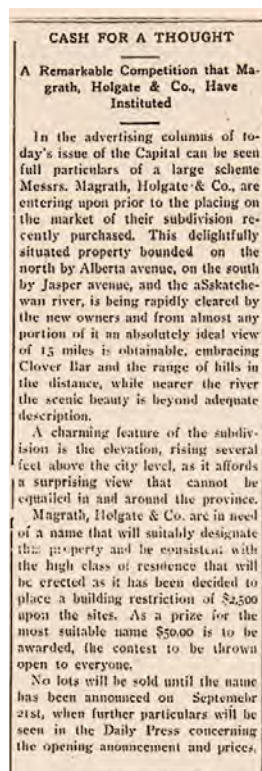




## The Holgate Residence

The first purchaser of the lot was the Honourable John A. McDougall in approximately 1910. Development began to percolate during the spring of 1912. William F. Brown obtained a building permit for the frame house on Lot 23 Block 23, Highlands Survey. He was the first occupant listed in 1913 (11150 64 Street). One of the most well-known Highlands residents, B. A. Holgate, obtained building permit no. 1541 on June 1912 for Lots 12-13 Block 9, Highlands Survey, located on North Ada Boulevard, currently 6210 Ada Boulevard.

In 1909, the Edmonton housing scene included an apartment building, the Gibbard block, currently at 6427 112 Avenue. It was built during 1912-13 and named for William T. Gibbard, president of the Gibbard Furniture Company of Ontario. It was centrally located near the streetcar line and in the commercial center of the Highlands. Designed by Ernest W. Morehouse, it was notable as the tallest building outside downtown Edmonton. Also, until 1914, 57 Street between 112 Avenue and 118 Avenue was named Gibbard Street. In November 1912, Holgate received a permit to build the first curling rink in the Highlands, at 11305/17 64 Street.



## The Highlands School

The school reflects the sporadic growth of the Highlands district from its beginnings as a rural fringe of the City of Edmonton to its present stature as one of the City's most beautiful residential districts. The first school at the location was built in 1910 and was a two-room wooden cottage school. The permanent school was built when the Highlands was annexed by Edmonton in 1911. In October 1912, the Edmonton Public School Board recommended the construction of a permanent school and the second floor was completed in 1920. The school was designed by school architect G. E. Turner in the Collegiate Gothic style.



**Photo Top Left**  
Holgate Residence (City of Edmonton Archive EA792-208)

**Photo Top Right**  
Highlands School

**Newspaper Inset**  
Excerpt from The Edmonton Capital – Sept. 10, 1910; page 6.

**Photo Below**  
Highlands School in 1922 with original building on the right. (Edmonton Public School Archive P89.2.10)



## The Magrath Mansion

“ The Magrath Mansion was built in 1912 and designed by architect Ernest W. Morehouse. This fourteen room, three storey home was the showpiece of the Highlands neighbourhood, and was built by developer William Magrath. The building is noticeable for its size and grandeur, particularly evidenced by the two storey verandah with flat roof and ionic columns. The hipped roof is clad in red clay tiles, which combined with the multiple dormers creates a unique silhouette. The mansion's interior featured oak paneling, ornate ceilings, winding staircase, linen wall coverings, and parquet floors, many of which have been restored.

William Magrath was born in 1870 and came to Edmonton 1904. He was a real estate developer and businessman. With his business partner Holgate, they aspired to develop the Highlands as an upscale neighborhood. An active player in municipal affairs, Magrath ran for mayor in 1912 but lost to William Short. With his wife Ada and their family, he moved into this home in 1912 where he lived until his death in November, 1920. Unable to pay the property tax, the home was seized from Ada Magrath by the local sheriff in 1931, and sold to the city in 1933. After sitting empty for several years, it was rented as suites in 1937 before the Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop took up residence in the mansion in 1949. It has since returned to a private home. ”

[source: [www.edmontonsarchitecturalheritage.ca/structures/magrath-mansion](http://www.edmontonsarchitecturalheritage.ca/structures/magrath-mansion)]



## Marshall McLuhan House

The wooden Craftsman-style bungalow is one of the oldest houses in the neighbourhood. It was built in 1912 for real-estate promoter Herbert McLuhan, his wife and their son Marshall. The house was designed by Arthur Nesbitt and Ernest Morehouse who also designed the Holgate and Magrath Mansions. The house has a low-pitch roof structure with an open veranda, supported by tapered square columns with concrete block piers. The house has been preserved as an interpretative centre for McLuhan's life and achievements. Marshall was a prominent English professor in the University of Toronto and a prominent Canadian writer and media academic.

## Buttercup Farm Park

A plaque on the park sign recounts the site's history. The park, triangular shaped, is located on the north side of 60 /58 Street from 112 Avenue. It got its name from the annual splash of bright yellow blossoms which in the early 1900's defined the eastern boundary of an acreage that extended from 57th to 60th Street between 112th and 118th Avenue. The original farmhouse was built in 1912 and is still a prominent landmark at 11243 58 Street. 'The Smiths' (1918-1942) nurtured the flowers and raised chickens and a cow named Buttercup.






Photo Top Left  
Magrath Mansion (David T. Macpherson)

Photo Top Right  
McLuhan House



MAP 2 – Historic Assets and Street Names



-  Highlands Neighbourhood
- Jasper Avenue**  Historic Street Name
-  Historic Significance
-  Potential to Highlight Historic Street Name at Intersection with Stamp or Plaque in Concrete.
-  Existing Historic Trail Map/Wayfinding

## Ada Boulevard

The name “Ada Thirsee Magrath” is linked to the existing top of bank roadway named ‘Ada Boulevard.’

Ada Magrath was the wife of pioneer real-estate developer William J. Magrath, best known for the development of the Highlands neighbourhood. She was on the first Board of Directors of the Edmonton YWCA and was active in the Highlands, Wesley and McDougall United Churches. A six-block portion of Jasper Avenue formally became Ada Boulevard was extended to include the part of 113 Avenue lying between 48 Street and 50 Street (Source: Naming Edmonton, The City of Edmonton). The boulevard runs through the three neighbourhoods of Virginia Park, Bellevue, and Highlands from 75 Street to 50 Street and connects this neighbourhood to the Edmonton river valley. With views of the North Saskatchewan River Valley, it is a unique roadway in Edmonton shared by people who walk, bike and drive.



## Highlands Streetcar

*“In 1911, Magrath Holgate proposed to pay for the construction of Streetcar line. In just ten months, the line was running from the boundary of East End Park (now known as Borden Park) along Knox Avenue (now known as 112 Avenue) to Irwin Street (now known as 63 Street).”*

[source: My Heart’s in the Highlands – the Building of a Historic Edmonton Community]

*“The streetcar Route No. 2, which has white colour route sign, ran from 61 Street and 112 Avenue, where it used to turn around to continue its route to Bonnie Doon via the High-Level Bridge during the 1930s to 1950. The streetcars were converted to trolley buses by 1951.”*

[source: Edmonton Transit System Story, 1903–1978]

A turnaround used by the streetcar is still located at 61 Street and 112 Avenue with a washroom building for ETS drivers to use on their routes.



**Photo Top**  
Edmonton Radial Railway Streetcar – 1911 (Glenbow Archives NA-55-3.)

**Photo Above**  
United Church 1932, (City of Edmonton Archive EA160-866)

**Image**  
Transit map from September 1951 with the Trolley Turn Around Highlighted.



## The Gibbard Block

“ The building originally featured nine suites, between one and five rooms each, on the second and third levels and two storefronts at street level. Each suite had electric lighting, their telephone and intercom, and hot water in bathrooms, each lighted from a central skylight well. An acetylene central gas plant provided fuel for cooking. With terrazzo flooring in the foyer and a pressed tin ornamental ceiling on the main floor, this apartment was built to draw a refined class to the newly developed Highlands district. The exterior is finished in Redcliff brick from southern Alberta and displays Classical Revival features such as brick pilasters, large scrolling wooden brackets, wood and metal cornice, contrasting lintels and large keystones above the windows. Well-known Edmonton architect Ernest W. Moorehouse [sic] designed the apartment block to include what a 1913 newspaper trumpeted as “the latest idea in architecture, comfort, modern equipment and convenience.” It was the vision of Highlands promoters William Magrath and Bidwell Holgate who purchased the property originally. They soon turned to William Thomas Gibbard of Nipanee, Ontario for one-third of the \$90,000 needed to construct this building. Gibbard likely never lived in Edmonton, but he visited his daughter and her husband here. In fact, part of 57th Street between 112th and 118th Avenue was named Gibbard Street for a short time. Initially, the apartments were rarely vacant, and the grocery and drug stores that held tenancy on the main floor stayed for many years. But with the passage of time, the block ended up changing hands several times, and by the 1970s and 1980s, the building served as low-income housing. It took another visionary to bring the Gibbard Block back to its glory days. Ernest Eder opened a bistro in the building in 1979 and steadily bought out several partners to gain full ownership in 1988. ”

[source: [edmontonhighlands.ca/2018/02/13/the-gibbard-block-hhs-open-house/](http://edmontonhighlands.ca/2018/02/13/the-gibbard-block-hhs-open-house/)]

The Gibbard Block is under new ownership and is undergoing renovation as of January 2019.



## The Highlands United Church

“ Highlands United Church was built to replace an earlier church completed in 1913, erected on land donated by the Magrath-Holgate real estate company, and designed by their resident architect E. W. Morehouse. By 1925 the community urged the Church Board to build a larger structure to support the growing community and congregation. By the time the construction of the new building was finished in 1926, the United Church of Canada had formed through the union of the Methodist, Congregational, and some Presbyterian Churches, and Highlands Methodist Church was renamed Highlands United Church. Many United churches built additions in the late 1940s and early 1950s to help serve growing congregations. Reflecting this trend, Highlands United added a large International style addition in 1953, complete with flat roof, cantilevered porch, and long bands of windows. ”

[source: [edmontonsarchitecturalheritage.ca/structures/highlands-united-church/](http://edmontonsarchitecturalheritage.ca/structures/highlands-united-church/)]

The Church is still in operation today.

### Photo Top

Gibbard Block (Gordon Hearn, Edmonton Historical Board).

# 1.5 Background Policy Review

The following City of Edmonton policies and statutory plans are used to guide this UDA, in conjunction with feedback identified through public engagement activities for this renewal and City of Edmonton standards and policies.

## The Way Ahead

*The Way Ahead* was approved by Council in 2008 to provide a vision for Edmonton in 2040. To achieve this vision, it establishes six strategic goals. The six goals include transforming Edmonton's urban form, utilizing public transportation, improving livability, environmental preservation, financial sustainability, and diversifying the economy. These lay the foundation that guides the City to enhance the quality of life for all Edmontonians. The following directional plans termed "*The Ways*" documents guide the development of the vision and the policies that guide this urban renewal. The six, ten-year strategic goals include:

“ Transform Edmonton's Urban Form: Edmonton has increased its density and optimized existing infrastructure while maintaining and revitalizing strong, vibrant neighbourhoods; ensuring high standards of urban design; adopting best land use practices and preserving natural areas and public spaces.

Enhanced use of public and active modes of transportation: Enhancing public transit and other alternatives to single-occupant vehicles will provide Edmonton with a well-maintained and integrated transportation network. Increased use of these options will maximize overall transportation system efficiency and support the City's urban planning, livability, financial, economic and environmental sustainability goals

Improve Edmonton's liveability: Edmonton is one of Canada's most livable cities because it is welcoming to all; is safe and clean; fosters its heritage and supports its arts and multicultural communities; encourages active lifestyles through recreational opportunities and engages its citizens in the City's vision and directions. ”

## The Way We Grow

*The Way We Grow* is the City's *Municipal Development Plan* that identifies current development and identifies City needs for future growth and development. This document guides the development of more detailed statutory plans. One of the guiding initiatives of the Way We Grow is a focus on urban design, which aligns with the goals of urban renewal to reflect good urban design principles in our neighbourhood streets and public spaces. This UDA complies with the following policies:

- “ 4.2.1 Ensure that redevelopment in established neighbourhoods supports the health and livability of our citizens.
  - 4.2.1.4: Encourage redevelopment in established neighbourhoods, including the construction or reconstruction of new pedestrian areas and outdoor public spaces, to incorporate universally accessible design and age friendly design.
  - 4.2.1.6: Optimize the use of existing infrastructure in established neighbourhoods.
- 4.3.1 Fully serve Edmontonians with a comprehensive range of accessible, flexible, inclusive and safe parks and public facilities.
  - 4.3.1.3: Develop a strategy to address reinvestment and rehabilitation of park space in mature neighbourhoods.
- 4.6.1 Support the provision of a variety of transportation modes for Edmontonians.
  - 4.6.1.1: Support Corporate initiatives to improve walkability and other active transportation modes.
- 5.1.1 Embrace high quality urban design throughout Edmonton.
  - 5.1.1.8: Encourage urban design that reflects Edmonton as a winter city, allowing residents to enjoy the City in all seasons.



**5.2.1** Enhance established neighbourhoods by ensuring the design of new development, infrastructure and community facilities makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood.

**5.2.1.10:** Protect the green legacy of established neighbourhoods as redevelopment occurs by retaining and enhancing parks, walkways and trees.

**10.1.1.7** Collaborate with communities, landowners and other organizations to identify potential areas to develop temporary or permanent urban agriculture activities. ””

## The Way We Green

*The Way We Green* is the City of Edmonton's 30-year environmental plan that emphasizes resilience and sustainability. This UDA complies with the following objectives and its related strategies.

”” **Objective 6.1:** Edmonton's overall built environment (i.e., an urban form that includes buildings, roads, and infrastructure) is designed to minimize energy consumption.

*Strategic Action 6.1.7:* Encourages developments that permit Edmontonians to conveniently walk, cycle, and use public transit to get to the places they live, shop, work, learn, and play.

**Objective 6.5:** Travel in Edmonton is energy-efficient and more citizens use public transit and active modes as their preferred choice of transportation.

*Strategic Action 6.5.3:* Create a walkable environment.

*Strategic Action 6.5.5:* Create an integrated network of multi-use trail facilities. ””

## The Way We Move

*The Way We Move* is the City's *Transportation Master Plan*. This strategic plan works closely with the *Municipal Development Plan* providing the framework for the City's current and future transportation needs. This Plan promotes increased use and access to transit and active modes of transportation. This UDA complies with the following strategic objectives and its related strategic action:

”” **Objective 6.1:** The City will create a walkable environment.

*Strategic Action 6.1.a:* Adopting and implementing a strategy for sidewalk infrastructure to prioritize and construct missing links in the pedestrian network.

**Objective 6.2:** The City will create a cycle-friendly city.

*Strategic Action 6.2.b:* Designing and constructing bike facilities in accordance to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.

**Objective 7.5:** The City will promote and undertake the safe planning, design and operation of the transportation system.

*Strategic Action 7.5.b:* Continuing to improve the safety of the roadways through multifaceted approaches such as working with communities to implement speed management measures including speed boards and photo radar.

**Objective 7.6:** The City will appropriately mitigate the impacts of the transportation network on existing and future residential communities.

*Strategic Action 7.6.a:* Undertaking Community Traffic Management Plans to address community speeding and short-cutting traffic issues. ””

## The Way We Live

*The Way We Live* is known as “*Edmonton’s People Plan*” which acknowledges the municipal government’s role in bringing people together to create a civil, socially sustainable and caring society with opportunities for a safe and attractive city for everyone. The Urban Design of a neighbourhood has direct impacts on the way people live, and this plan sets priorities for creating vibrant neighbourhoods that are connected, engaging, welcoming, attractive and safe. This UDA complies with the following objectives:

“ **Objective 1.2:** The City of Edmonton uses its social and physical infrastructure at the neighbourhood, city, regional and global level to create connections by promoting the use of an integrated, accessible pedestrian and bike network.

**Objective 1.5:** The City of Edmonton connects Edmontonians and Albertans to their history, heritage and unique role as Alberta’s Capital City by promoting its rich history and diverse cultural heritage.

**Objective 2.1:** The City of Edmonton celebrates and promotes healthy living by providing infrastructure and public spaces to promote and encourage healthy and active living.

**Objective 2.2:** The City of Edmonton provides for the well-being of its citizens through outstanding parks, natural, green and public spaces.

**Objective 2.6:** The City of Edmonton hosts world leading arts, cultural, sports and entertainment events at venues that attract a local, regional and global audience by using its infrastructure and public spaces to host events and performances.

**Objective 4.1:** Edmontonians enjoy safety and security of person, place and community by designing and building its infrastructure using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles. ”

The City of Edmonton utilizes “*The Ways*” strategic plans, as well as, the following policies to help guide the Highlands Neighbourhood Renewal Project:

## Active Transportation Policy

The *Active Transportation Policy* (Sidewalk Strategy and Bicycle Transportation Plan) was adopted by Council in November of 2009. This policy applies to any form of human-powered transportation such as walking, skateboarding or cycling. The policy intends to optimize these opportunities throughout the City and to enhance safety, inclusivity, and diversity of communities. The policy supports active transportation through enhancing infrastructure, raising awareness, education about transportation systems, enacting bylaws and sharing responsibility for infrastructure, programs, facilities and initiatives through partnerships.

“ **D.1** Continue with current standards (sidewalks on both sides of arterials, collectors, and locals) unless there is clear justification that sidewalks will not significantly contribute to the objectives of encouraging walkability, connectivity, and active transportation.

**D.7** Apply current and evolving practices for planning and designing sidewalk infrastructure to incorporate the needs of the aging population.

**D.8** Construct all new sidewalks based on universal design principles.

**D.9** Be more supportive of customization of sidewalk alignments and cross-sections where it contributes to the objectives of walkability, connectivity, and active transportation. ”

## Bicycle Transportation Plan Update

The purpose of the plan is to “*provide an integrated system of roadway, public transit, pedestrian, and bike facilities to accommodate the travel needs of citizens, businesses, and visitors.*”



## Community Traffic Management Policy

*Community Traffic Management* includes measures to minimize traffic short-cutting and speeding to enhance safety and community liveability for residents and all road users in accordance with *The Way We Move* and *Vision Zero*. Adopted by council in 2017 it includes initiatives that raise awareness about appropriate and safe driver behaviour in residential communities.

## Vision Zero

*Vision Zero* is part of Edmonton's *Road Safety Strategy 2016–2020* that was approved by Council in 2015. *Vision Zero* is the City's long-term goal of achieving zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Edmonton is the first major Canadian City to officially adopt *Vision Zero*. This strategic plan incorporates *The Way Ahead*, *The Way We Live* and *The Way We Move* to identify targets and supports a long-term commitment to road safety. This strategy intends to improve road safety by following the five E's of traffic safety (Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, Education and Engagement).

## Breathe – Green Network Strategy

*Breathe*, *Edmonton's Green Network Strategy* was created as an inventory of green spaces within the City of Edmonton and to guide and sustain a healthy City by providing a network of open space within neighbourhoods. This strategy applies to sites, neighbourhoods, the City and the region and follows three major themes: ecology, celebration, and wellness.

The Highlands Neighbourhood Renewal aligns with this strategy by promoting livability, sustainability, and encouraging the use of public transit, walking and cycling. An implementation plan for the *Breathe* strategy has yet to be produced.

## Elevate

*Elevate – The Report of the Community Sustainability Task Force* was approved in February 2012 and focuses on helping neighbourhoods become more vibrant, sustainable and livable. The City works with citizens, community partners, school boards and all orders of government to support and challenge the City to be better and stronger by providing recommendations and proposed actions to create solutions for Edmonton's mature neighbourhoods.

The Highlands Neighbourhood Renewal project particularly aligns with *Recommendation 3*:

“ Create a template for the development of an asset-based development plan for every mature neighbourhood (which will change over time), to understand strengths and areas of need, to engage the community directly, and to ensure that community goals and input are prioritized, particularly when development is being pursued and/or advocated. ”

## Highlands Neighbourhood Planning Study

The Highlands Neighbourhood Planning Study was approved by Council on March 12, 1986 and most recently amended in December 2013. This study was completed to identify and address four major issues which include traffic volumes, expansion and intensification of 118 Avenue commercial strip, preservation of Highlands' unique residential and historical character and the impact of redevelopment.

The Highlands urban renewal project aligns with *Urban Design Policy 15.B.6* which states that “*The City will identify and conserve historic and distinctive older areas of the City which contribute to the interest and character of the urban environment. Furthermore, the City will establish policies and design guidelines to ensure that new buildings constructed in areas of special identity are compatible with existing development.*”

## Public Engagement Policy

The *Public Engagement Policy* (PEP) adopted by Council in April of 2017 ensures facilitation of public input and coordinates an outcome-driven approach to public engagement while adhering to the public engagement requirements of the *Municipal Government Act*. The PEP is supplemented by the City of Edmonton Public Engagement Procedure and the Public Engagement Framework that guides the implementation of policy and key components of public engagement.

## Winter City Design Guidelines

The *Winter City Design Guidelines* were formulated and approved by the City of Edmonton in 2016 to provide ideas and standards that improve our streetscapes in the context of Edmonton's winter climate and conditions. The policy was formulated with the goals of making the City more accessible, safe, aesthetically pleasing and enjoyable year round.

- Incorporate design strategies to block wind.
- Maximize exposure to sunshine through orientation and design.
- Use colour to enliven the cityscape.
- Create visual interest with the strategic use of creative lighting.
- Provide infrastructure that supports the desired winter life.

This UDA considers the noted *Winter City Design Principles* in its recommendations for urban design solutions for urban renewal.

## Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards

The City of Edmonton's *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards* (June 2018) have been finalized and published. These were created to provide a holistic approach to streetscape design and to create streets that are safe, comfortable and convenient for everyone, regardless of age, ability, or form of transportation. The holistic nature of the guidelines requires assessing how to balance the needs of a number of users and to consider sustainability, efficiency, beauty and safety in the design of streets. Complete Streets aims to achieve the following principles:

- Provide travel options for all users and trip purposes in a safe, accessible, context sensitive manner in all seasons.
- Form a network of streets that together accommodate all users and allow for efficient and high quality travel experiences.
- Be adaptable by accommodating the needs of both present and future through effective space allocation for the many functions of the street.
- Contribute to the environmental sustainability and resiliency of the City.
- Consider both direct and indirect costs, as well as the value of the roadway and the adjacent real estate; and be vibrant and attractive "people places" in all seasons, contributing to an improved quality of life.

In the case of urban renewals the City assesses existing functions of streets and looks for ways to improve the infrastructure to support multi-modal movement.

## Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) is a set of principles that are used to discourage criminal activity and promote a feeling of safety through the design of places and streets. The UDA considers these principles in the development of urban design solutions for the streets and public spaces within the Highlands neighbourhood. Several recommendations that can be applied to the Highlands Neighbourhood Renewal project include improved sightlines, passive surveillance, lighting, and escape routes.

## Checklist for Accessibility and Universal Design

This checklist is intended for use in projects to help meet the minimum standards for barrier-free accessibility. Accessibility applies to all people, with a particular focus on those with disabilities and mobility challenges. The document includes guidelines for, parking, entranceways, building design; most applicable to neighbourhood renewal is signage, the location of street furniture, and ramps. The following checklist is considered:

- 1.3 Curb ramp to sidewalk located between parking spaces.
- 3.4 General and way-finding signage consistent in design and easily identifiable.
- 11.2 There should be good colour contrast between street furniture and background surfaces (generally, grey colours should be avoided as they blend into the general background).
- 11.3 Variety of benches should be provided (some including a back and an arm rest).

## Edmonton Urban Design Guidelines

Guidelines are based upon recognized best practices and are generally in alignment with community values. They:

1. Guide new development in order to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties and public spaces.
2. Encourage respect for neighbourhood scale, character and quality.
3. Guide how new development can minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties and public spaces.
4. Require respect for neighbourhood scale, character and quality.

## Low Impact Development

Low impact development focuses on the hydrology of a site or area and ways to manage the stormwater in a manner that mimics the natural processes as closely as possible. This strategy supports the City's environmental strategy in *"The Way We Green."* It can be implemented within urban neighbourhood renewals through use of permeable surfaces and vegetation that allow rain water infiltration into the ground to reduce evaporation, flooding and degraded water quality.

## Ravine System Protection Overlay

City of Edmonton Zoning Bylaw 12800, Section 811-North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System Protection Overlay: the purpose of this overlay is to provide a development setback from the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System.



## River Valley ARP

The purpose of the *North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan* (Office Consolidation September 2017) is to protect the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System as part of Edmonton's valuable open space heritage and to establish the principles for future implementation plans and programs for parks development and the retention of the designated residential areas of Rossdale and Cloverdale. This Plan then becomes the first part of a comprehensive River Valley and Ravine management program, by enunciating policies and a plan of action. The following policies shall apply in making conceptual plans for Ada Boulevard and its adjoining green area:

### “ 3.2 Parkland Development Policies

In keeping with the Parkland Development Objectives in Section 2.3, the following policies are identified:

#### 3.2.1 Natural Conservation Area

It is a policy of this Plan that those areas which have significant vegetation, potential wildlife and waterfowl habitat, or other unique natural physical features shall be managed as nature conservation areas and may be used for outdoor education, interpretation or low intensity recreational activities.

#### 3.2.2 Intensity Range of Recreational Uses

It is a policy of this Plan that a low to high intensity range of recreational activities will be developed and managed within the River Valley.

#### 3.2.3 Location of Recreational Facilities

It is the policy of this Plan to locate the higher intensity recreational and cultural facilities in close proximity to major roadways, public transit routes and direct River crossings, except in the Central area.

#### 3.2.5 Viewpoint Parks

It is a policy of this Plan that selected sites with existing and outstanding view potential will be encouraged to be developed as "viewpoint" parks.

#### 3.2.6 Accessory Land Uses

It is a policy of this Plan that accessory land uses such as cafés, restaurants,

bike rentals or other commercial establishments which are complementary to recreational and open space opportunities and harmonious to the natural environment will be encouraged where land use districting permits.

#### 3.2.10 Trail System

It is the policy of this Plan to establish pedestrian and other non-motorized vehicular movement systems; which includes bikes, cross-country ski trail developments and equestrian trails in selected areas; as the primary modes of movement along and through the River Valley.

#### 3.2.17 Urban Design and Architectural Guidelines

It is the policy of this Plan that all public development will conform to Council approved environmental, urban and architectural design guidelines to be developed in future studies and park development plans.

#### 3.2.18 Access for the Handicapped

It is the policy of this Plan that recreational facilities will be designed, if feasible, to accommodate access and other requirements of the handicapped.

### 3.3 Environmental Protection Policies

#### 3.3.1 Preservation of Natural Resource Areas

It is the policy of this Plan to recognize the Plan Area as containing natural resource areas which will be preserved and enhanced for recreational, scenic, and ecological purposes.

### 3.4 Transportation Policies

#### 3.4.2 Negative Impacts of Existing and Future Transportation Facilities

It is the policy of this Plan that existing and future transportation facilities will be reviewed with the objective to eliminate, minimize or mitigate the negative effects of the facilities through design and landscaping measures. ”



## 2 Existing Neighbourhood Assessment

Photo  
Residential road in Highlands.

### 2.1 Urban Form and Land Use

The urban form and land uses in a neighbourhood are important to understand how residents use their surroundings and what scale and form urban design features should take to effectively fit into the context of the community. **MAP 3 – Urban Form & Land Use** identifies the general building forms and land uses within the neighbourhood. The predominant land use within the Highlands neighbourhood is low density residential single-family housing.

Single-family homes range from one-storey bungalows to two-storey properties with vehicular access via a rear lane. The built forms are softened by the overhanging canopies of the mature trees. Most of the single-family houses are owned rather than rented. Due to the varied construction periods, the built form has similarities based on their era of construction. Medium-density residential land use, zoned RA7, is at the north-central portion of the neighbourhood along 118 Avenue. This land use comprises semi-detached, fourplexes, and three storeys walk-up apartments.

Most of the commercial developments in the neighbourhood are adjacent to 118 Avenue. The land use zoned CB1 – Low-Intensity Business Zone, CSC – Shopping Centre Zone, contains personal service shops, pharmacy and a closed grocery store. The northeast corner of the neighbourhood, zoned

CB1, includes a fast food centre and retail store. The southeast corner of the intersection of 112 Avenue and 65 Street is zoned CB1 and includes the 'Mandolin Book and Coffee Shop. This shop is a well-known social gathering spot for the neighbourhood. Adjacent to it is the Gibbard Block, a provincial historic building. The lot is currently being rezoned from CBC to DC1- Direct Development Control Provision and the proposed development will retain the existing three storey historical building.

The existing land use form complies with Municipal Development Plan Policy 5.2.1.9 *“Support neighbourhood commercial centres as community focal points by encouraging small-scale residential and mixed-use redevelopment and the inclusion of plazas and other social gathering spaces.”*

It is noted that most of the street widths and building height ratios along the street have a human scale.

The institutional buildings, comprising of churches and schools and are located mostly on the southern portion of the neighbourhood. The two churches are United Church and Highlands Baptist Church. Mount Royal Elementary School is scheduled to be closed and redeveloped once the Highlands Junior High School expansion is complete. The only 4-storey residence in the neighbourhood is Highlands Place Seniors Residence located at 6209 118 Avenue.

There are several infill developments in the neighbourhood, which present an opportunity to modify the predominant urban form of the neighbourhood without compromising the historical integrity. The infill developments aim to preserve the mature trees and are generally two-storey houses.

Via Ada Boulevard, residents have opportunities to enjoy recreational activities because of the neighbourhood's proximity to the river valley and the Highlands Golf Course. Apart from these, there are four parks: Highlands Park, Gaby Haas Park, Buttercup Farm Park and Henry Martell Park. There are also two open spaces which have an opportunity for redevelopment: the Trolley turnaround at the southeast portion of the intersection of 112 Avenue and 61 Street, and at the five-way intersection of 111 Avenue and 57 Street and 60 Street. The Highlands has an active community league at 6112 113 Avenue and is planning a redevelopment of the site. The neighbourhood also enjoys the hundred year old Highlands Lawn Bowling Club.

“ Highlands began its development as a prestigious residential area in 1908. Since then, Highlands has experienced various stages of development. As a result, its housing styles vary in age and architectural style reminiscent of the period of construction. Out of a total of 1,123 residential structures, 5.7% were built between 1900–1919, 19.9% were built between 1920–1939, 66.3% were built between 1940–1959 and 8.1% were constructed after 1959. The development of housing stock in Highlands progressed from west to east, with the larger number of pre-1940 dwellings located in the western section of the community. A great proportion of the pre-1940 housing stock still survives. Many of the residences, ranging from small bungalows and cottages along 66 Street to the substantial homes along Ada Boulevard and 111 Avenue, are in good to excellent condition. ”

[source: Highlands Neighbourhood Planning Study Consolidation, December 2013, City of Edmonton; p. 6, Section 2.1].

A number of the houses with historical significance were built as early as 1912. The Highlands neighbourhood contains some of Edmonton's best-preserved refined historical buildings. These buildings preserve their unique historical architectural appearance and provide wonderful character to the neighbourhood. These prestigious buildings were designed based on the following famous architectural styles:

- **Arts & Crafts style:** The style was a reaction against the excessive ornamentation of the Victorian era.
- **Craftsman style:** The style was similar to Arts and Crafts but less detailed. It was very popular in Edmonton from the 1910s until the early 1930s.
- **Tudor Revival style:** The style drew strong influences from medieval England, but added elements seen in Queen Anne and other Victorian-era styles as well. It was used in Edmonton for many different structures, including churches, schools, and residences.
- **Neoclassical style:** The style reflects the qualities of ancient Greeks and Roman art and culture.
- **American Foursquare style:** During 1910–1920s, the socio-economic classes loved the Foursquare style of architecture, a colloquial form of prairie style originating in America. The typical house layout had a square footprint with equally divided interior spaces.

Historic residences, commercial buildings, and institutional buildings were all influenced by the architecture styles described above.







# MAP 3 – Urban Form & Land Use

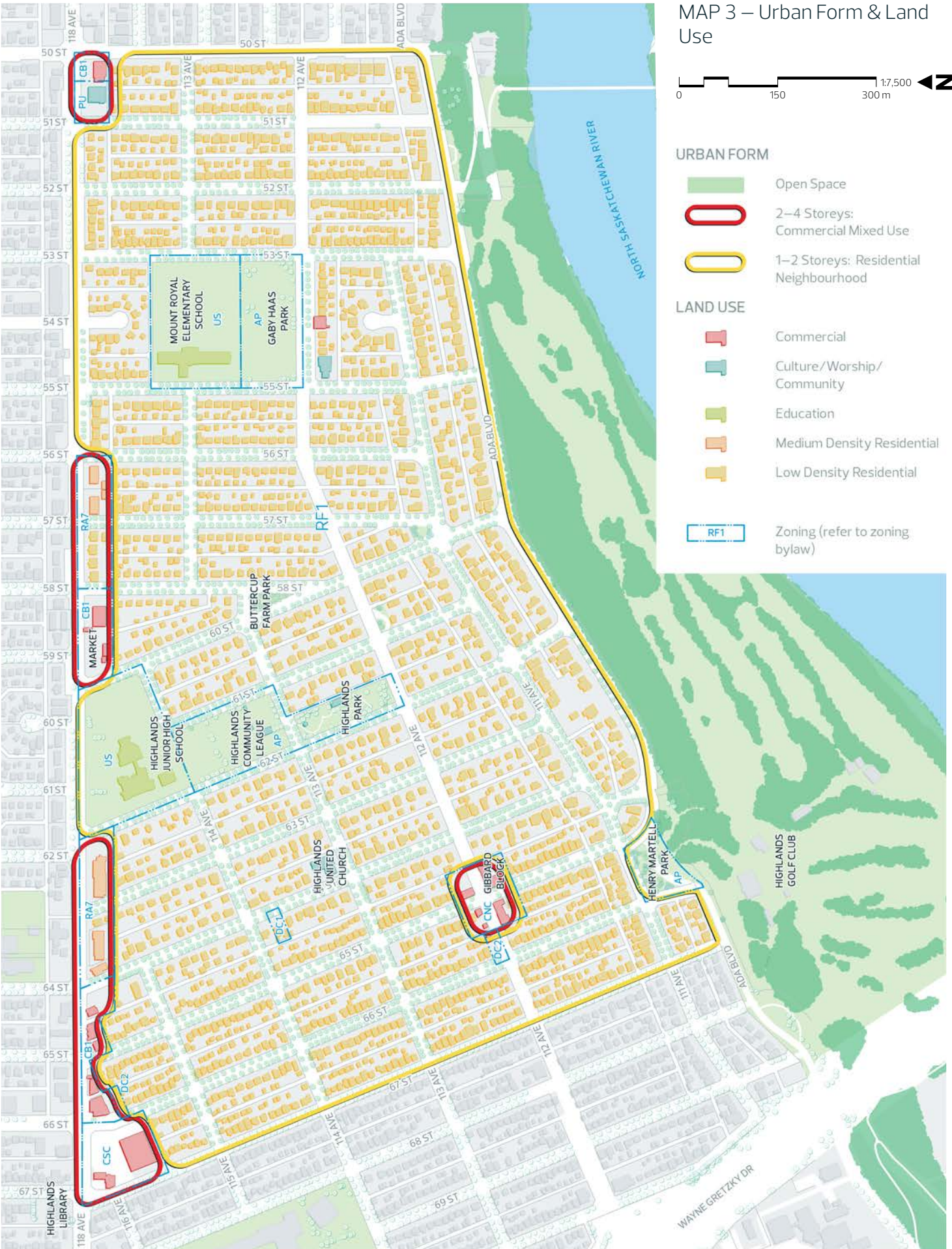


## URBAN FORM

-  Open Space
-  2–4 Storeys: Commercial Mixed Use
-  1–2 Storeys: Residential Neighbourhood

## LAND USE

-  Commercial
-  Culture/Worship/Community
-  Education
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Low Density Residential
-  Zoning (refer to zoning bylaw)



## 2.2 Vehicular Transportation

In general roads are classified in a hierarchy of local, collector and arterial. Local roads carry low volumes of traffic at low speeds, collectors gather traffic from locals directing them to arterials which carry large volumes of traffic as major through roads.

A review of the vehicular transportation shows that in Highlands, there is generally a grid layout with most roadways throughout the neighbourhood classified as residential locals with on-street parking. 112 Avenue, 118 Avenue and 50 Street are arterial roadways, which carry heavy traffic around the neighbourhood. 50 Street forms the east boundary of the neighbourhood and runs from Ada Boulevard to 118 Avenue. 112 Avenue is the only two-way non-truck arterial route, which carries traffic through the neighbourhood in an east/west direction. 118 Avenue is a major truck route arterial road that moves traffic east/west along the north boundary of the neighbourhood to the major arterial road, Wayne Gretzky Drive.

66 Street and 53 Street are two collector roadways starting north of 112 Avenue to 118 Avenue. 66 Street is a one-way northwest bound collector road. Right-in/right-out access from local roads are located at 51 Street, 52 Street, 55 Street, 60 Street, and 62 Street all along north/south direction. The signalized intersections within the neighbourhood are on 112 Avenue at intersections of local roads 55 Street, 62 Street, and 65 Street.

Highlands has a designated shared bike route along Ada Boulevard. As per the legal descriptions, Blocks 9, 10, 30 and 37 are arranged parallel to Ada Boulevard so that houses on these blocks have a front facing the ravine. Due to this arrangement, a few local roads (56 Street, 57 Street, 63 Street, and 64 Street) end at 111 Avenue, restricting their direct link from 118 Avenue to Ada Boulevard.

As identified in **MAP 4 – Existing Road Carriageway Widths**, existing roads range in pavement width and right-of-way. Typical pavement widths are 7.5m to 8.0m wide within a 20m right-of-way. Mature trees and private landscaping within the right-of-ways provide challenges to making changes to the existing roadways to improve accessibility and connectivity.

### Parking Status

The 112 Avenue arterial road has peak hour parking restrictions on both sides of the roadway. A service lane south of 112 Avenue between 53 and 55 Street is the only place with permitted on-street parking along 112 Avenue. 118 Avenue has no on-street parking on the boundary of the neighbourhood. 50 Street has parking availability only on a portion of the street.

66 Street has on-street parking on both sides of the road, whereas 53 Street has seasonal parking on the east side of the road and prohibited parking on the west side of the road. Ada Boulevard has on-street parking permitted on both sides of Ada Boulevard between 51-62 Street, with the balance having parking permitted only on the north side of the Boulevard. Local roads where on-street parking is allowed on both sides are:

1. 51-52 and 58 Street between 113-118 Avenues
2. 53 Street and 64 Street between 111 Avenue and Ada Boulevard
3. 55 Street north of Mount Royal School
4. 60 Street between 111-112 Avenues
5. 65 Street between 114-115 Avenues

Other local roads have on-street parking permitted only on one side of the road. These roads also include prohibited parking spaces that are adjacent to parks, community league, and schools as identified in **MAP 5 – Vehicular Transportation**.

Through engagement, the public identified concerns with traffic short-cutting through the neighbourhood at local roads along 111 Avenue, 53, 58 and 66 Streets. Speeding issues are identified at 65 and 66 Streets. Most local roads within the neighbourhood, except for school zones, have a speed limit of 50km/hr. Speed humps at various locations on Ada Boulevard are present to discourage speeding, where the speed limit is 50 km/hr.



# MAP 4 – Existing Road Carriageway Widths

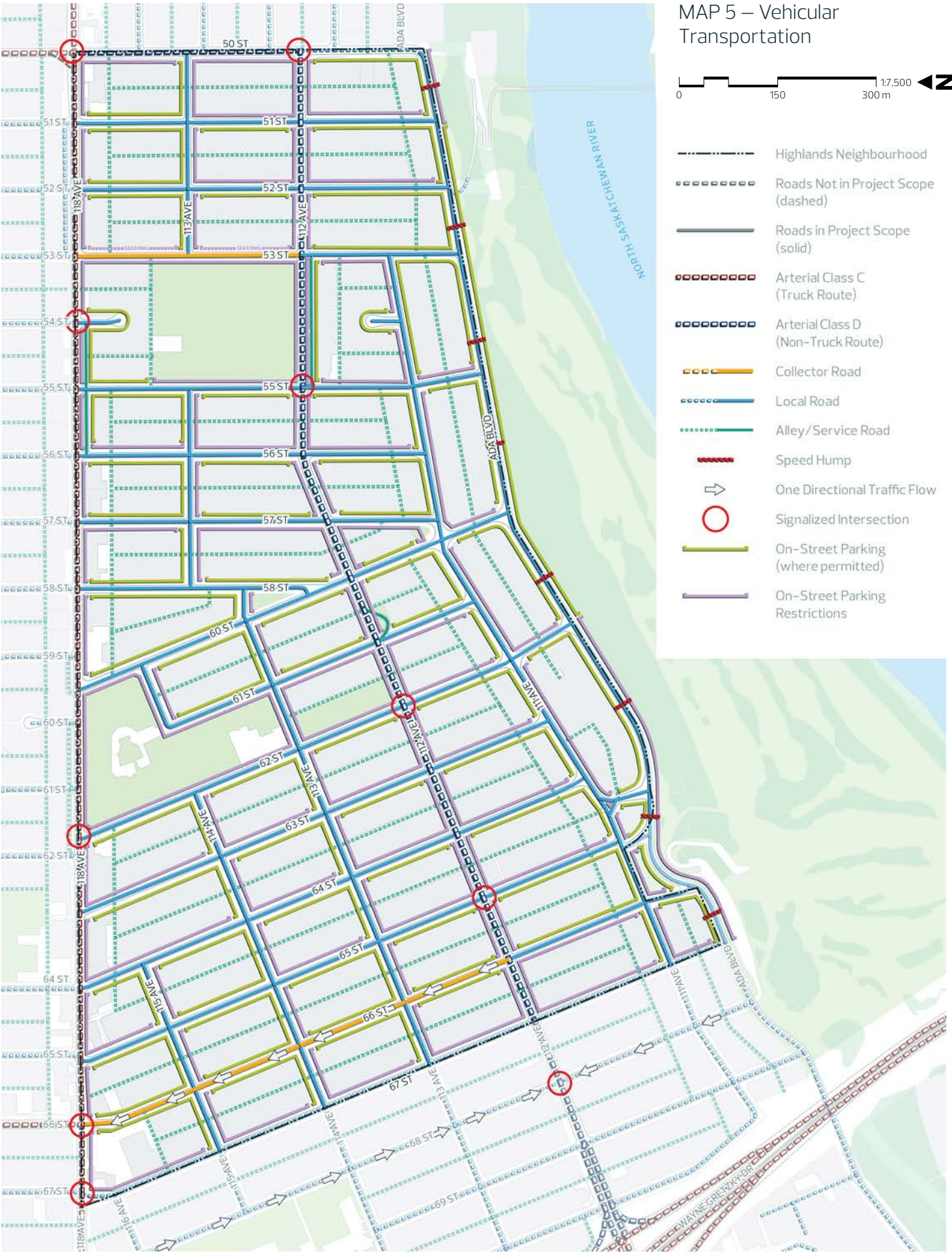


- Highlands Neighbourhood
- ±6.5 m Service Road
- ±7.5–8.0 m Road (20 m R/W)
- ±8.5 m Road (20 m R/W)
- ±9.0 m Road (20 m R/W)
- ±9.3 m Road (24 m R/W)
- Varies as specified





# MAP 5 – Vehicular Transportation



- Highlands Neighbourhood
- Roads Not in Project Scope (dashed)
- Roads in Project Scope (solid)
- Arterial Class C (Truck Route)
- Arterial Class D (Non-Truck Route)
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Alley/Service Road
- Speed Hump
- One Directional Traffic Flow
- Signalized Intersection
- On-Street Parking (where permitted)
- On-Street Parking Restrictions

## 2.3 Active Transportation and Transit

**MAP 6 – Existing Active Transportation & Transit** identifies the existing transit routes and bike facilities within the neighbourhood. The primary bus transit services are along 112 Avenue and 118 Avenue. The bus service also loops along a segment of 53 Street between 112–118 Avenues, and a portion of 50 Street between 114–118 Avenues crossing along Mount Royal School. All the bus routes connect to nearby neighbourhoods, Concordia University of Edmonton, Bellevue Community League, Edmonton EXPO Centre, Northlands Ice Coliseum and Coliseum LRT Station. The transit routes are designed to ensure that all residents have access to major transit routes within 400 m walking distance.

Typical residential streets in the neighbourhood have 1.5 m concrete sidewalks. Several sidewalks in the neighbourhood are covered with asphalt overlay and stone. Highlands residents support replacing sidewalks with broader width where possible. Most of the current sidewalks are without curb ramps. There are several missing sidewalk connections in the neighbourhood:

- In Henry Martell Park
- On both sides of Ada Boulevard
- Between Ada Boulevard and 111 Avenue
  - A portion on both sides of 50, 52 Streets from Ada Boulevard
  - On the east of 53 Street
  - On both side of 55, 60 Streets
  - On the east side of 62 Street
  - On the west side of 64,65,66 Streets
  - On the east of 67 Street
- On the west side of 60 Street between 114 Avenue and 118 Avenue
- Between 111–112 Avenue
  - A portion on the west side of 53, 56 Streets
  - On the west side of 57 Street
- On the west side of 64 Street between 115 Avenue and 118 Avenue
- On the north of 111 Avenue between 53–55 Streets
- On both sides of 111 Avenue between 65–66 Streets
- Buttercup Farm Park
- On the South side of 113 Avenue between 50–67 Streets
- On the south side of 114 Avenue
- On both sides of 115 Avenue

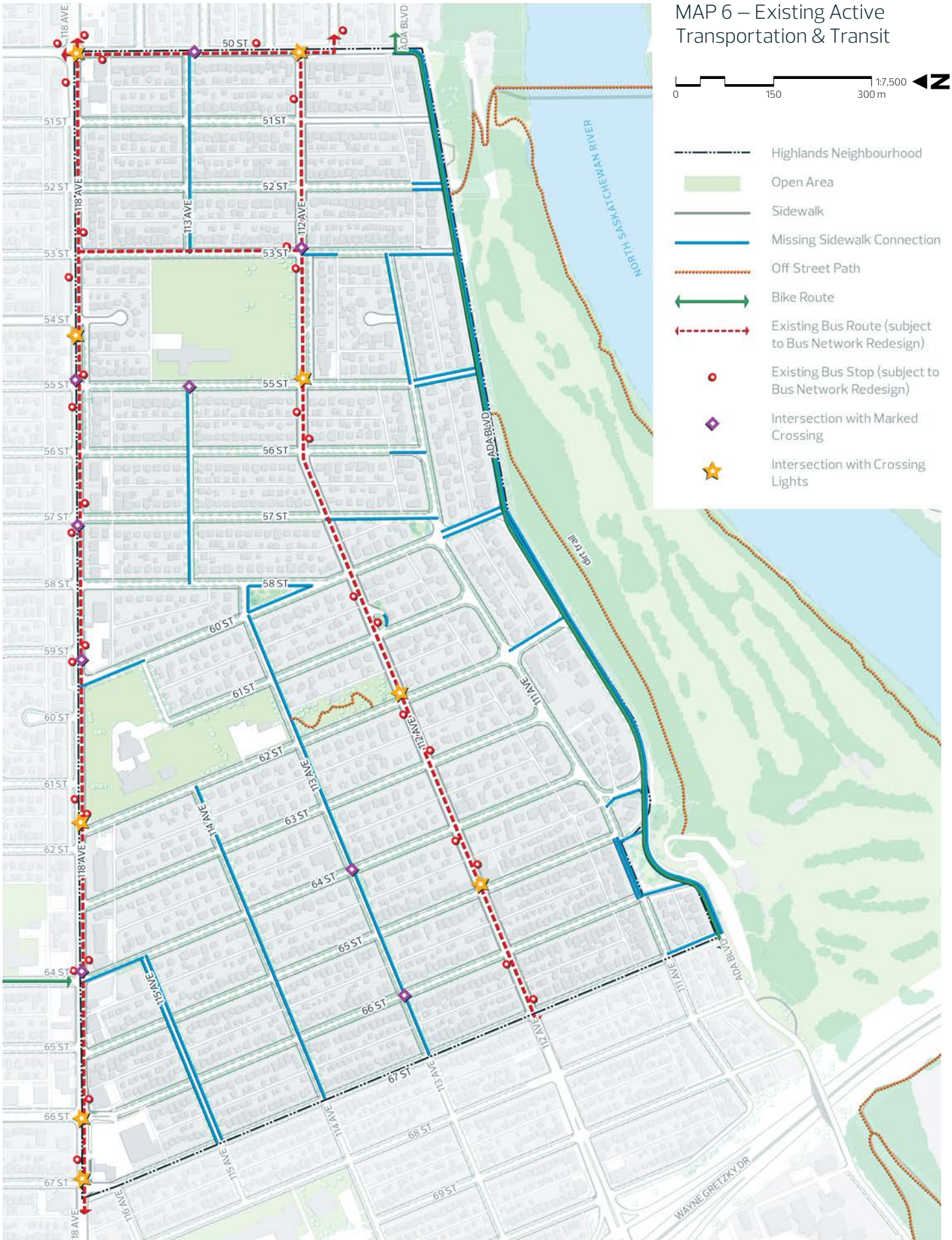
During public engagement sessions, residents shared concerns about the following issues:

- Safe-walking and accessibility
- Speeding along some streets
- Lack of good street lighting due to street light bulb hidden by high tree canopies
- Streetlight poles far apart, and light not being bright enough
- Lack of curb ramps along street intersections
- Improving sight lines for people who walk
- Improving drainage on streets
- Trimming of mature trees and shrubs for better sightlines
- Provide infrastructure for safer pedestrian crossings
- Add trail through and along Buttercup Park

Highlands residents use Ada Boulevard as a shared roadway for driving, biking and walking. It connects them to James Ingram Gullion Park, Henry Martell Park, Highlands Golf Club, Betty Stanhope–Cole Park, Wayne Gretzky Drive, Concordia University of Edmonton, Borden Park, Coliseum LRT station, and Commonwealth Stadium to the west and ACT Aquatic Recreation Centre to the east. Ada Boulevard also provides a connection to the other side of North Saskatchewan River crossing the Capilano Footbridge to Capilano and Gold Bar Park, through paved trails. Additional gravel trails along the river valley banks can be accessed from the main trail and Ada Boulevard.



# MAP 6 – Existing Active Transportation & Transit







### 3 Public Engagement Process/ Results

A comprehensive series of Public Engagement events took place, from Fall 2017 through 2019, and included a Project Introduction Meeting, a Stakeholder Workshop, two in-person public workshops at Highlands School and Mount Royal School, an on-line and hard copy survey, feedback via email, a pre-workshop walk and an event at Henry Martell Park. The project team has reached out to residents, business owners and stakeholders to ask for input to refine the vision and define important elements to support the creation of this UDA and preliminary designs for neighbourhood renewal. The input received is used in conjunction with City policies, programs, projects and technical requirements for this project.

As presented in the associated *“What We Heard”* report, a vision and important elements were identified and refined by residents to guide the renewal efforts for their neighbourhood streets and public open spaces. The workshops also helped to identify *“What Is Working Well”* and *“What Needs Attention”* for Highlands.

The following Vision and Important Elements have been created through public and stakeholder consultation to guide this Neighbourhood Renewal Project.

**Photo**  
Community members providing input at the Highlands Pop Up Event in June 2018.

## 3.1 Vision

*"Highlands is a safe, friendly, and highly-connected neighbourhood. It is an active and accessible destination, where people enjoy modern infrastructure and beautiful gathering spaces surrounded by local history."*

### Important Elements

- Highlands features its natural beauty, including mature trees and connections to the river valley
- Highlands is an active and accessible neighbourhood, where streets and sidewalks are designed to favour pedestrians and other active modes of transportation
- Highlands is a safe neighbourhood, where traffic management and lighting help people feel secure moving throughout the neighbourhood
- Highlands is a friendly neighbourhood, where there are beautiful, functional and accessible outdoor areas for people to gather
- Highlands honours and reflects its history, recognizing local points of interest and telling stories about the diverse groups of people who lived on these lands
- Highlands is a connected neighbourhood, where the streets and sidewalks support a natural flow of people who move both north and south of 112 Avenue

The input that people shared has helped to refine designs and identify areas for improvement that reflect the community vision. Information gathered included thoughts on Highlands' strengths, issues, and opportunities, in the context of the Highlands Neighbourhood Renewal Project.

### Strengths

Regarding strengths, participants generally appreciated:

- It's a walkable and bikeable neighbourhood, where people usually feel safe doing both
- It's a charming neighbourhood that has a small town feel, and the multi-use spaces (i.e., roads where people can drive, walk, and bike) help contribute to its character
- There are a lot of outdoor amenities that allow people to participate in a variety of leisure and recreation activities
- The outdoor parks and green spaces are safe, open, and well-maintained
- There is a lot of available parking, which is helped by the 72-hour parking program
- There is year-round access to the river valley, including through the Highlands Golf Course
- There are large intersections
- There are new curbs between 113 Avenue and 114 Avenue and between 64 Street and 67 Street
- There is good access to public transit

## 3.2 Public Input

FIGURE 2 – Public Engagement Timeline



### MAP 7 – April 2018 Public Workshop Input

visually represents “WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION” communicated through public engagement. Following is a list of general comments gathered at the workshops.

- Missing walkway links and curb ramps
- Uneven surfaces and narrow sidewalks are hazards within the neighbourhood
- Concerns related to biking include
  - Absence of bike rack at Henry Martel Park and Ada Boulevard
  - Add a bike lane along 113 Avenue
  - Missing bike paths which could connect nodes, such as parks, schools, transit, and commercial areas, within the neighbourhood
- Some local roads were identified as too narrow including 66 Street between 112-113 Avenue
- Traffic short-cutting through the neighbourhood was identified at local roads along 111 Avenue
  - Traffic calming, crossing and speeding issues were identified along
    - 111 Avenue
    - 5-way intersection at 111 Avenue and 60 Street
    - Intersection of 111 Avenue and 62 Street, 67 Street
    - 112 Avenue 60-62 Street
    - 112 Avenue and 55th Street for a left turn
    - 112-118 Avenue along 65 and 66 Street
    - Along 62 Street adjacent to Highlands Community League and Highlands Park
    - Connecting streets of 111-118 Avenue
  - Poor lighting due to improper light pole spacing or covered by tree canopies
  - Lack of access points providing good walking trails to the River Valley



FIGURE 3 – Summary of Comments from April 2018 Public Workshop



- Poor drainage, low spots and grading issues at several locations
- Parking space issues at the following locations
  - Ada Boulevard, particularly on the west end due to Concordia University overflow
  - Only one side of 66 Street between 112 to 118 Avenue should be available for parking to avoid congestion
  - Remove parking on east side of 65 street between 114 and 115 Avenue for proper fire and EMS access
  - Remove on-street parking on 63 Street between 114–118 Avenues for homeowners
  - Parking should be on the west side of 53 Street near the school for student safety
- Historical/wayfinding signs were suggested to direct people to neighbourhood features, such as dog off-leash park, Henry Martell Park, and Capilano footbridge
- An alternative solution to chain link fence at the east boundary of Highlands School adjacent to 61 Street
- Dead tree removal and trimming of trees were suggested throughout the neighbourhood, especially along Ada Boulevard and the intersection of 60–61 Street and 111 Avenue
- Mature elm tree seeds could plug up and cause maintenance issues for water fountain feature
- Public street furniture, such as trash cans and benches were requested at
  - A few bus stop locations within the neighbourhood
  - On 111 Avenue between 64–65 Street
- Potholes at several locations
- Suggestions for park site improvements included
  - Decorative water fountain
  - Drinking fountain
  - Public toilets
  - Public art
  - Additional playground equipment
  - Barbecues
  - Dog off-leash area
  - Park lighting
  - Bike racks
  - Electric sockets operated by solar energy to allow people to plug in during events
  - Designated pathways without salt and gravel for wheelchair accessibility



# MAP 7 – April 2018 Public Workshop Input



- Highlands Neighbourhood
- Speeding/Short-cutting
- Parking Concerns
- Improve Lighting
- Add/Replace Trees
- Add Path/Connection
- Close Road/Add Greenspace
- Sidewalk or No Sidewalk on Southside of Ada Boulevard
- Intersection Improvement
- Potential Gateway Feature
- Wayfinding Signage
- Historical Plaques/Signage
- Add Furniture (Bench/Trash)
- Add Bike Parking
- Add Public Art
- Trim Trees for Better Views
- Create Pocket Park
- Add Roundabout



## Ada Boulevard Public Input

Renewal of Ada Boulevard is included in the neighbourhood renewal project. The following are the issues identified by the public specific to the boulevard:

- Manage speeding and traffic
- Existing speed humps are barriers to accessibility
- Short-cutting on 65 Street and Ada Boulevard during Concordia University terms
- Lack of speed limit signs and speed humps
- Not enough space for parking. Parking becomes congested during university terms and golf season
- Lack of wheelchair accessible parking at pocket parks along the boulevard
- Lack of sidewalk, designated bike path
- Keep the roadway the same, without a sidewalk
- Road intersections along the boulevard are too wide
- Presence of underutilized open spaces
- Lack of park furniture, lights, wayfinding signs, lack of identified pathways without salt and gravel. Salt and gravel erode wheelchairs and destroy wheels
- Poor drainage
- Lack of access points along the boulevard to the river valley
- Lack of directional sign to Capilano footbridge
- Trees and shrubs need to be cut and trimmed
- Excessive garbage due to lack of bins

The input from the workshops was considered and reflected in the proposed urban design solutions in this report.

Photo  
East end of Ada Boulevard.



## 3.3 On-Site Urban Design Walk

Prior to preparing the concept plans for urban design improvements, the project team performed an on-site analysis through a neighbourhood walk, followed by several more site visits. The following table identifies observations and initial design considerations from the walk.

### General Notes

- Add curb ramps at intersections
- Remove asphalt sidewalks and replace with new concrete
- Lighting to be chosen by community league
- Accommodate roots with adaptive sidewalk features
- Several owners have extended landscape features into the boulevards (i.e. hedges, rock gardens, retaining walls and other masonry features); there may be challenges reclaiming these areas (for wider sidewalks, etc.)

- 1 Buttercup Park** – potential to refurbish park naming sign and historical plaque on south point. History suggests naming is from yellow flowers that grew in the area. Also the Smith farmhouse is located across the street and there is a story about a cow named Buttercup.

Realign south intersection to create a "T". Add sidewalk on one side with access to benches and potential plaza. Young flowering trees in good shape and provide nice aesthetic in the spring. Park is visible from 112 Avenue. Update garbage bin and locate in less prominent location.

- 2 Connector at 113 Avenue and 60 Street** – potential to close 113 Avenue north of Buttercup Park and include in park space or to add pedestrian crossing elements to the park.
- 3 Community League** – the Highlands Community League is developing plans to renew the community hall and surrounding licensed land. Power poles bisect site and burying them underground would improve aesthetics. Potential for paved bikeway crossing south of Highlands school from 114 Avenue.

- 4 Highlands Park** – add raised and marked crosswalks between community league site and Highlands Park.

Playground needs updating and increase functionality of washroom building. Playground would be a community partner project lead by the community.

Gazebo includes picnic tables. Potential to add interpretive info to gazebo posts. Potential to refurbish signage or replace. Splash Park new and in good shape. Good community gathering space central to the neighbourhood.

- 5 61 Street east of Community League** – busy traffic/speeding for school drop-off. Narrow road. Review to add parking two sides and curb extensions to calm traffic.

- 6 ETS historical turnaround** – washroom for drivers with card lock on the site and public sand box. Potential for redevelopment to residential/commercial site. Close road. Underused infrastructure and land. Potential pocket park, but on busy 112 Avenue. Potential historical art or interpretive feature about ETS.

- 7 114 Avenue** – sidewalk on one side. May not be possible to add sidewalk to other side due to grades and mature trees.

- 8 66 Street north of 112 Avenue** – speeding complaint in workshop. One way couplet with 68 Street. Add midblock curb extensions for traffic calming. Keep parking both sides to maintain narrow street for traffic calming.

- 9 113 Avenue** – potential for east/west bike lane. This street has sidewalk on one side only. Challenges to adding sidewalks on both sides include: power utilities, inconsistent placement of boulevard trees, steep grades and owners' use of existing flankage.

FIGURE 4 – Urban Design Walk Context



- 10 **65 Street Commercial** – businesses want patio space in the boulevard. Review options for additional parking opportunities on street such as cutting in stalls between trees.
- 11 **Henry Martell Park** – add sidewalk to north side of road to avoid private features on public boulevards. No boulevard trees on that side. Add walkway at northwest corner of park between trees to benches and connect to park roadway. Trees could be trimmed to improve sightlines. Park sign in good shape. Potential to add more colour through planting or sculpture.

- 12 **111 Avenue and Ada Boulevard** – flowering tree in centre traffic island. Rest of island looks sparse/ floating. Potential to reshape the roadway. Need to test with adjacent homeowners.
- 13 **Intersections along 111 Avenue** – missing sidewalks on connector roads. Potential for parking one side and sidewalk. Narrow intersections or add roundabout feature. Potential to test as temporary feature in summer.
- 14 **Ada Boulevard** – narrow intersection by meandering the east/west roadway. Potential to remove guardrail. Consider River Valley Bylaw, Ribbon of Green for compliance with design elements. Create outlook vista opportunities to river valley. Options for design include woonerf, sidewalk north side, sidewalk south side, multi-use trail south side, separated bike lane, raised bike lane. Add signage to indicate access to trails below the bank.
- 15 **Roadway park at south end of 57 Street and 60 Streets** – trim trees to improve sightlines and surveillance. Create more inviting space. Potential staging area and gateway to/from Ada Boulevard. Include signage commemorating Jasper Avenue. Potential to close 57 street east of park with turnaround for residents. Add roundabout at intersection and sidewalk connection to Ada Boulevard.
- 16 **Looping bike path at Ada Boulevard and 51 Street** – path is a short semicircle with berm. Potential to add playground or climbing feature to allow views of the ravine. Signage for connection to pedestrian bridge. Stairs down the bank to be added under separate project.
- 17 **Gaby Haas/Mount Royal School** – add more landscaping or public art feature. Visual exposure to busy 112 Avenue. Feedback from workshop is that the site is too plain. Edmonton Public School Board will be closing this school in 3 to 5 years. Future use of the building and site is currently unknown.

## 3.4 SWOT Analysis

Public feedback and information gathered through various public engagement activities is a key source of the Strengths / Weakness / Opportunities / Threats (SWOT) analysis. The following table and **MAP 8 – SWOT Analysis** organizes the SWOT into its separate elements to help identify issues and the ways that the neighbourhood can be improved.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Ada Boulevard is a multi-modal shared street with unique character</li> <li>2 Views of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and natural edge on the south boundary of Highlands</li> <li>3 Green open space associated with Ada Boulevard and river valley</li> <li>– A strong sense of community attachment as many families have several generations living in the neighbourhood</li> <li>– A sense of history, heritage homes, architectural diversity</li> <li>4 Proximity to the river valley, Highlands Golf Course, Concordia University, EXPO Centre, and LRT</li> <li>5 Open spaces including Gaby Haas Park, Buttercup Farm Park, Highlands Park playground and spray deck, Henry Martell Park, historical Trolley Bus Route No. 2 turnaround space</li> <li>6 Recreational facilities such as Highlands Community League Hall, community garden, and Highlands Lawn Bowling Club</li> <li>– Tree-lined streets</li> <li>– The City has a budget allocated for renewals</li> <li>– The outdoor parks and green spaces are safe, open, and well-maintained</li> <li>– There are new curbs between 113 Avenue and 114 Avenue and between 64 Street and 67 Street</li> <li>– There is good access to public transit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Overall Lack of accessibility</li> <li>– Missing links and curb ramps, as well as, uneven surface and narrow width related to sidewalks within the neighbourhood</li> <li>1 Open spaces and schools have missing pathway connections</li> <li>– Missing bike paths which could connect nodes such as parks, schools, transit, and commercial areas, within the neighbourhood and to nearby neighbourhoods</li> <li>2 Traffic calming, crossing and speeding issues on 66 Street</li> <li>– Traffic short-cutting at several streets</li> <li>– Poor lighting due to improper light pole spacing or light covered by tree canopies</li> <li>– Poor drainage, low spots and grading issues</li> <li>3 Improper signage at triangular park at 111 Avenue and 57-60 Street</li> <li>4 Blind intersection at 112 Avenue and 56 Street</li> <li>– Concern when turning left onto 112 Avenue from several streets</li> <li>– Potholes at several locations</li> <li>5 Several issues were found along Ada Boulevard such as lack of sidewalks, lack of amenities, overused on-street parking, and lack of access to river valley</li> <li>6 112 Avenue as a barrier to cohesive neighbourhood identity north and south of 112 Avenue</li> </ul>



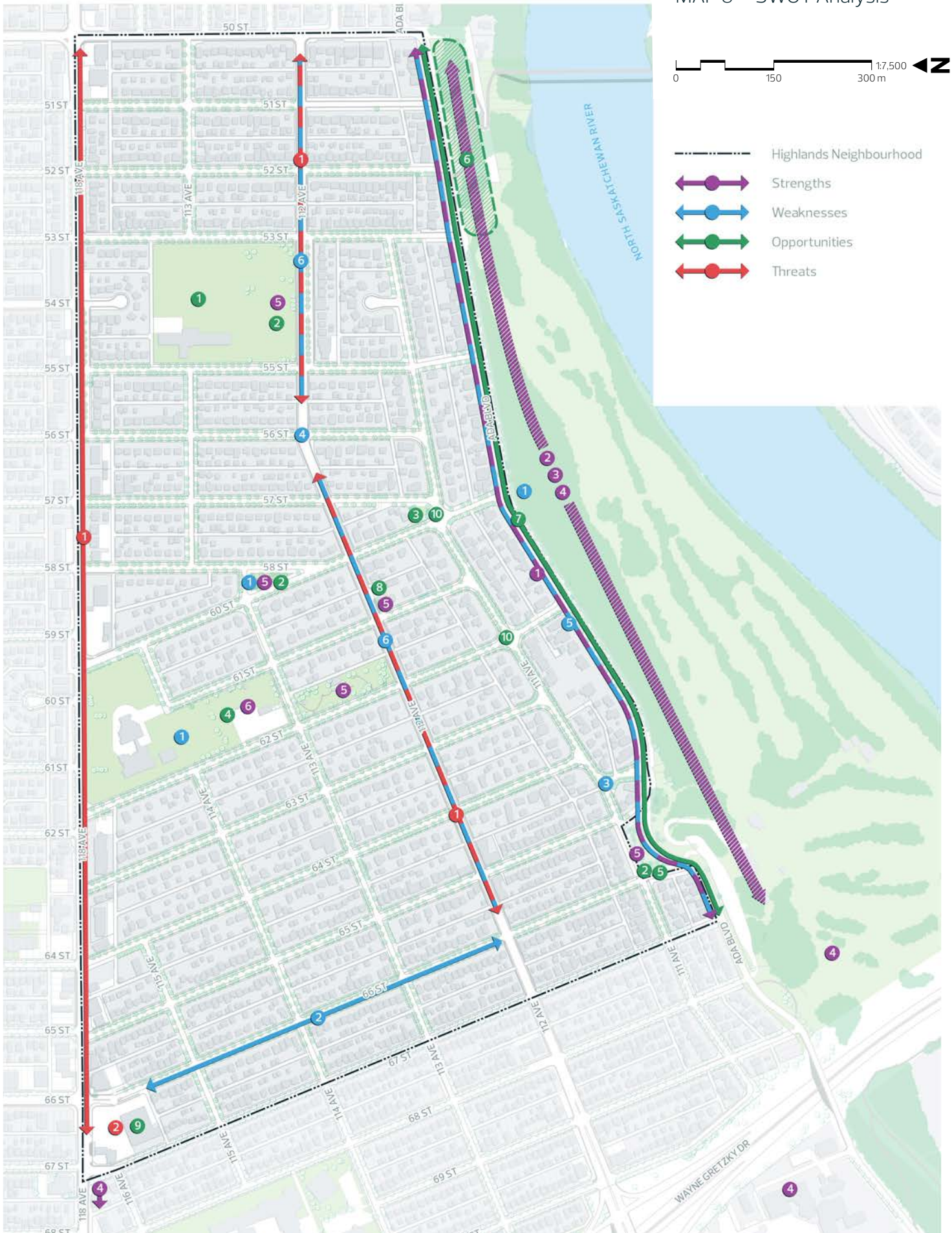
## OPPORTUNITIES

- To work with Highlands Historical Society as they have great insight into Highlands' history.
- 1 Mount Royal School closure will give an opportunity for a new development.
- 2 Redevelopment of open spaces including Gaby Haas Park, Buttercup Farm Park, Henry Martell Park and unnamed open green spaces.
- To recognize history of neighbourhood settlement and indigenous culture and to express in urban design elements.
- 3 Triangle shaped island located at 111 Avenue and 64-65 Street is looking for an alternative design.
- 4 City's ongoing projects including Highlands Community League's Facility Renewal Development and Highlands School Expansion.
- 5 Henry Martell Park-lights, sidewalks, playground equipment, solar power electric outlets for events.
- 6 Green space adjacent to Ada Boulevard: benches for all ages, picnic tables, barbecues, historical information plaques similar to an open-air historical museum, decorative lights, drinking water fountain, shelters, washroom, public art, site viewing decks, floral trees.
- 7 Ada Boulevard – designated bike lane, bike racks, wheelchair accessible, wayfinding signs, parking space and sidewalk connectivity.
- River Valley accessibility from Ada Boulevard- adding more access points from Ada Boulevard to the river valley.
- Mature trees are preserved to maintain wildlife habitat.
- 8 To redevelop Trolley bus turnaround.
- 9 Beautification and streetscaping at 66 Street by 118 Avenue to encourage redevelopment of old grocery store.
- 10 To add a roundabout at the specific wide road intersection and to beautify with public art, flowers, lights.
- Traffic calming (particularly near neighbourhood amenities which attract people).
- Publicly owned chain link fences with murals made by community residents or school children.
- Add lights to bus stops.

## THREATS

- The renewal may change the original character of the neighbourhood.
- 1 Redevelopment of 118 Avenue, 112 Avenue, 50 Street and alleys are out of scope.
- Budget restriction could limit urban design potential.
- Mature trees may limit roadway and sidewalk redesign potential.
- Some residents may have missed multiple opportunities to provide input to project.
- 2 Undeveloped land of former grocery store location might attract overgrowth and loitering.
- Vocal residents may influence or discourage input from some residents with different opinions.
- Other concurrent projects may not align with vision of renewal project.

# MAP 8 – SWOT Analysis







## 4 Urban Design Concept and Enhancements

The urban design of our streets and open spaces can affect the daily experiences of people who walk bike and drive. Well designed streets and open spaces can enhance the quality of their daily interactions, recreational activities, and commutes. Improved connections, aesthetics, and amenities can help support and encourage use of public spaces and social interaction within the neighbourhood.

In general, the urban renewal will replace existing sidewalks, street pavement, curbs and gutters and will add curb ramps and replace streetlights. This UDA for the Highlands Neighbourhood identifies opportunities to further enhance the standard renewals by identifying missing connections, needs for wayfinding signage, potential traffic calming measures, opportunities for beautification and reflection of history and character, along with concepts to improve public open space.

Ada Boulevard is a regionally recognized road for its access and views to the River Valley, historic housing, and multi-use roadway. Careful attention has been given to this road to balance community desires, neighbourhood character and to reflect City policies supporting universal access.

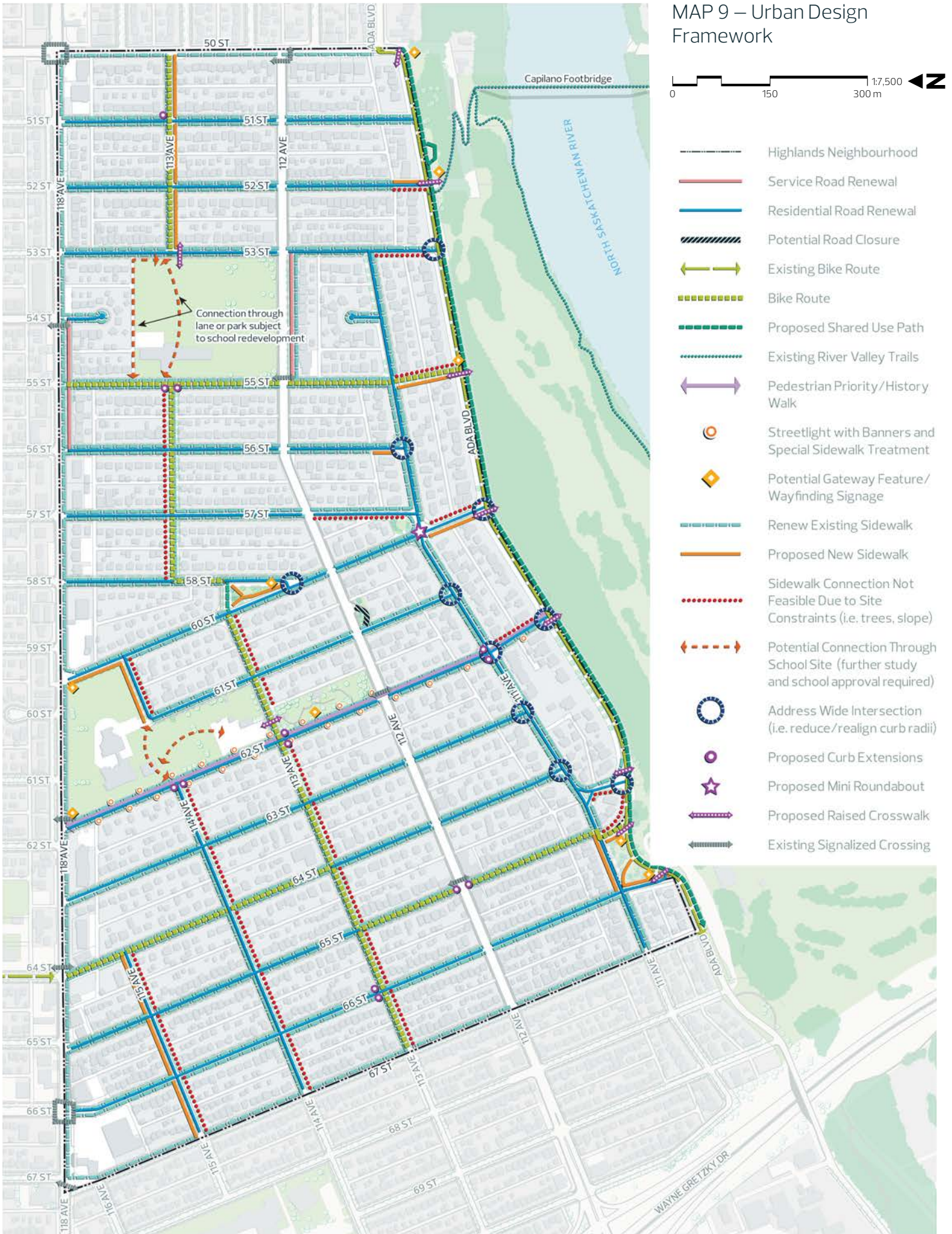
Based on public input, the background policy review, and site observations, the project team identified the following opportunities for urban design improvements in the Highlands Neighbourhood as summarized on **MAP 9 – Urban Design Framework**. The concept plan identifies possible locations for intersection improvements, gateway features, wayfinding signage, existing and proposed bike routes, open space improvements, missing connections and street typology. These concepts are explained in detail in the following sections.

### Photo

Existing ETS trolley turnaround.



# MAP 9 – Urban Design Framework





## 4.1 Active Connections, Walkway Improvements and Access to Transit

Walkway connections are reviewed as part of this project and are important to provide accessibility to and from neighbourhood places.

There are some considerations to adding sidewalks to streets. Overall, existing sidewalks are typically 1.5m wide, have been cracked over time, or disturbed by tree roots. There are several streets where sidewalks are missing. Where feasible, these missing sidewalk links will be added and all other sidewalks will be removed and replaced as part of the neighbourhood renewal. Of particular priority is adding sidewalks where they are missing on both sides of the road, such as on 115 Avenue, and connections between 111 Avenue and Ada Boulevard. The importance of pedestrian connections should be weighed against the importance of mature trees and other factors such as ground conditions, utilities, proximity to other connections and overall net benefit.

Where possible, sidewalks should be widened to 1.8m to be consistent with the City of Edmonton's *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards* and Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) standards that recommend this width. If widening to 1.8m is not possible at all locations, priority walking routes should be considered for improvement. Priority walking routes link neighbourhood amenities and are connected to destinations. Priority routes within Highlands include north/south along 65 Street, 62 Street and 55 Street. Priority east/west route is along 113 Avenue. Curb ramps will be added to all street corners to allow for universal accessibility. 2.4m sidewalk widths are suggested near the schools for parent drop-off and anticipated high pedestrian activity. In order to widen sidewalks, the proximity to the existing mature trees will be maintained and sidewalks widened towards the private property line. This is to limit damage to tree roots that could ultimately damage the tree itself. Where tree roots are causing heaving of existing sidewalks or it is anticipated this could happen to renewed sidewalks, it is recommended to add short breaks in the concrete to allow for even heaving as the tree roots grow without cracking the concrete, and thereby preventing tripping hazards. Another option is to curve the sidewalk around trees to maintain the minimum distance required by City of Edmonton Forestry.



Further detail on intersection design and walkability is included with the residential and commercial street plans in the following sections.

### Transit

There was very little feedback from residents related to accessing transit, but it was identified as working well. East/west bus routes are available on 112 Avenue and 118 Avenue; a north/south route is on the perimeter of the neighbourhood on 50 Street. There is ample opportunity for residents to use transit in Highlands, with bus stops at regular intervals along those streets.

**Photo**  
Example of existing sidewalk condition.

## 4.2 Bike Facilities

In general, there were low levels of comfort expressed by the public for additional bike routes within Highlands. Approximately 45% of participants support a bike route on 113 Avenue and 40% supported bike routes on a street travelling in a north/south direction.

### North/South Bike Routes

Two north/south connections are contemplated on 64/65 Street and 55 Street. These routes would connect 118 Street to Ada Boulevard.

#### 64 Street

64 Street connects to an existing bike route north of 118 Avenue. It is marked by blue signage and there is a signalized crossing at 118 Avenue. The bike route would shift west to 65 Street at 113 Avenue to go past Gibbard Block and the retail stores at that intersection. There is a signalized crossing at 112 Avenue and 65 Street, and the route then continues straight to Henry Martell Park at Ada Boulevard.

#### 55 Street

The bike route on 55 Street provides another primary connection past Mount Royal School. The appropriateness of this route may depend on what is planned for the redevelopment at the park space in the future. There is currently no signalized crossing on 118 Avenue at 55 Street.

### East/West Bike Routes

Based on site visits, City traffic statistics, and public input, additional bike routes may not be required within the Highlands neighbourhood. For the purpose of this report, several routes that could enhance cyclist connections within the neighbourhood have been identified.

#### Ada Boulevard

An existing bike route is located on Ada Boulevard and enhancements are proposed in several concepts within this report.

#### 113 Avenue

An additional bike route on 113 Avenue would provide an alternative to those travelling east or west, north of 112 Avenue. This route avoids the busy 112 Avenue arterial and the traffic lights along that road. There are currently no bike route connections in Bellevue or Beverly Heights neighbourhoods at 113 Avenue. Connections should be considered as part of those renewal projects. The connection to Bellevue should consider a route to Eastglen High Schools and Eastglen Pool. The proposed 113 Avenue bike route connects to the Highlands Community League and Highlands Park and then continues north of Buttercup Farm Park to 58 Street. At this point the route would be forced north for about 100m and then continue east on 113 Avenue to Mount Royal School. The school is scheduled for closure but at this time there is no plan for the park space redevelopment. A bike connection should be considered through the park and then continue east into Beverly Heights.

### Bike Route Facilities

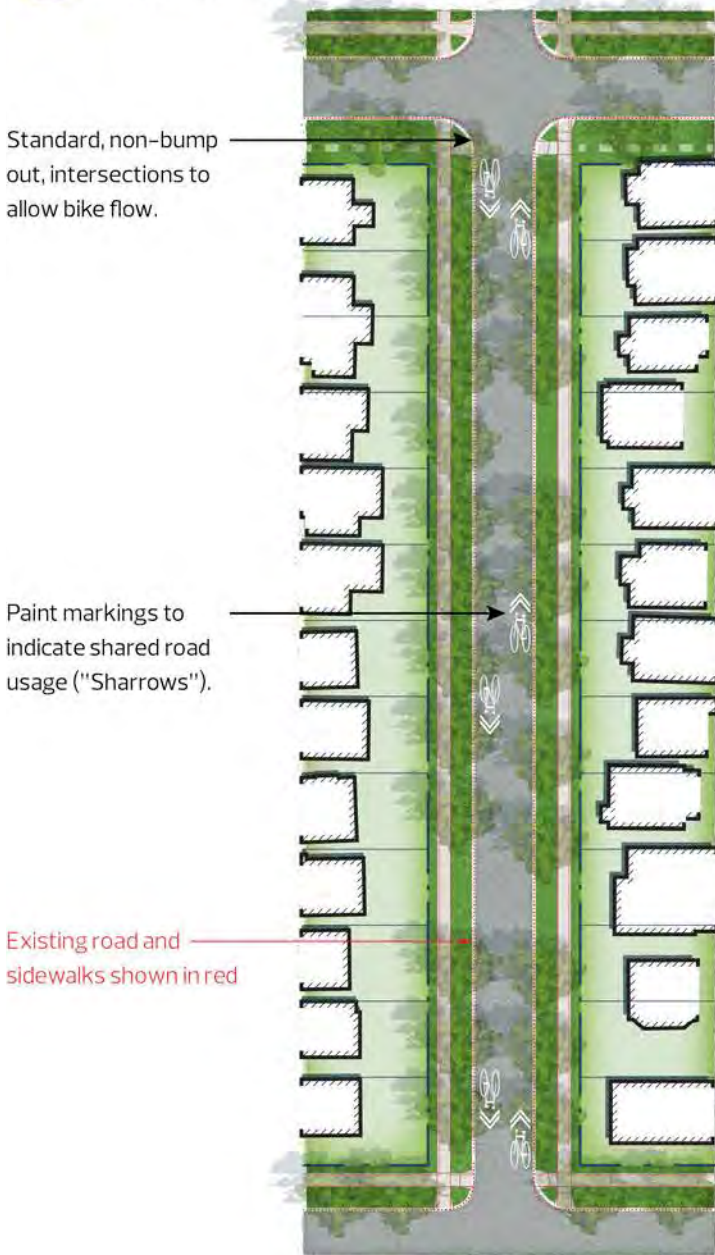
In general there was a low level of comfort expressed by the public for any bike facilities along residential roadways within Highlands other than Ada Boulevard. With 8m wide roadways, there are limitations on what types of facilities will fit in the right-of-way without disrupting mature trees or losing on-street parking. The following two options are feasible if a designated bike route is chosen for the residential streets in Highlands. The third option would be to not designate a bike route due to low public support and low traffic volumes, and to leave streets without a designated bike route.

Photo  
Existing 113 Avenue.



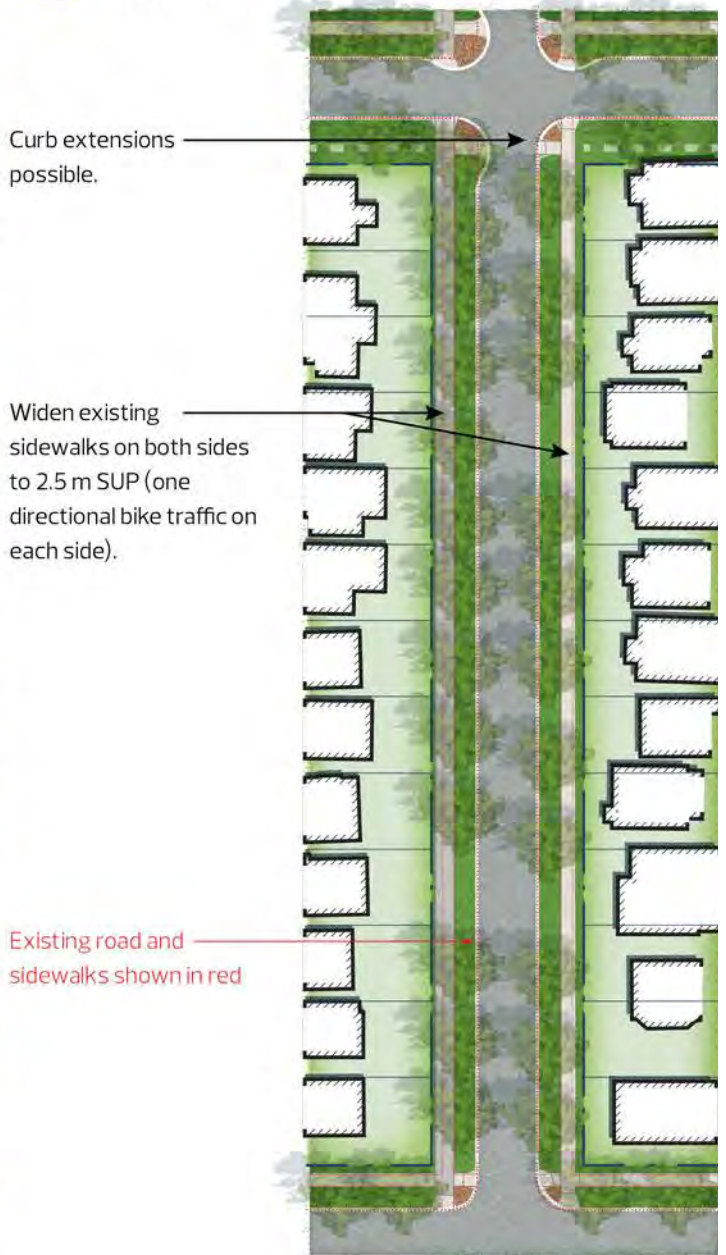
FIGURE 5 – Bike Route Street Renewal Concepts

**A1** Shared On Road Bike Route  
(North-South Roads)



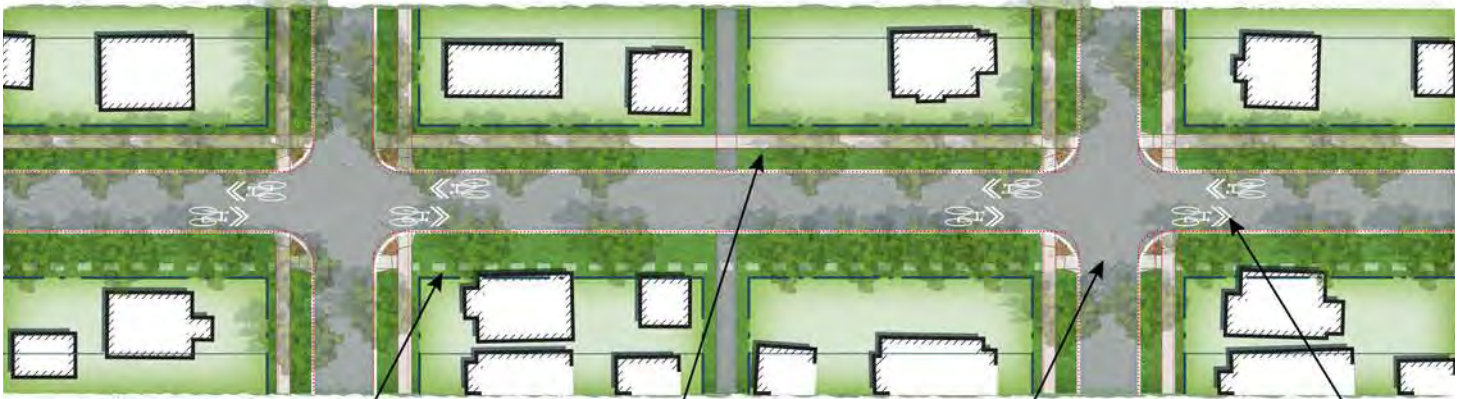
- Bikes share the road with cars
- Traffic calming measures strategically placed to slow car traffic

**B1** 2.5 m Shared Use Path  
(North-South Roads)



- People who walk and bike share space on the shared use path

## A2 Shared On Road Bike Route (East-West Roads)



Add 1.8 m sidewalks if site conditions allow (mature trees, side slopes, etc.)

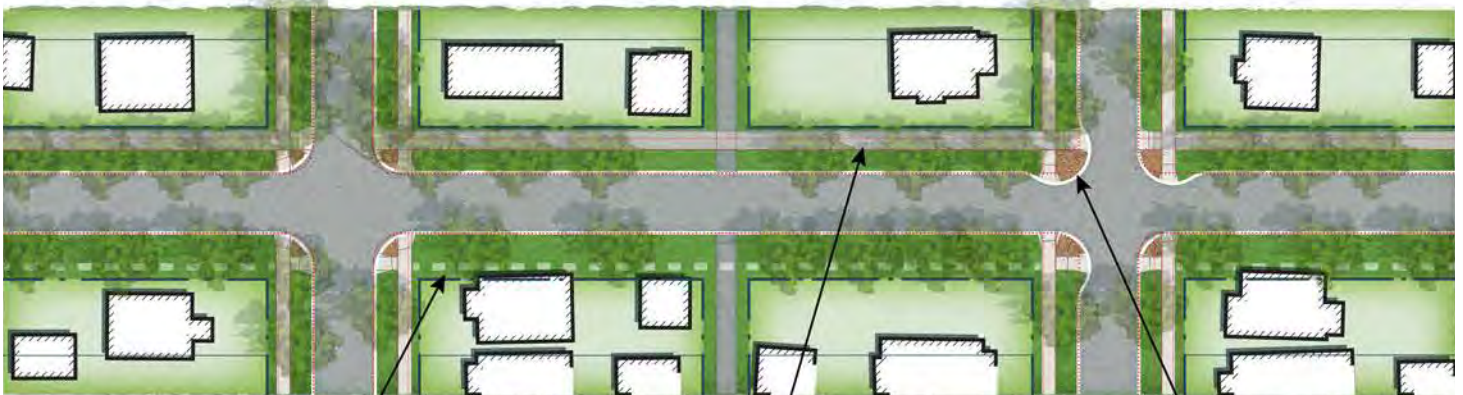
Widen existing sidewalks to 1.8 m.

Standard, non-bump out, intersections to allow bike flow.

Paint markings to indicate shared road usage ("Sharrows").

- Bikes share the road with cars
- Traffic calming measures strategically placed to slow car traffic

## B2 2.5 m Shared Use Path (East-West Roads)



Add 1.8 m sidewalks if site conditions allow (mature trees, side slopes, etc.)

Widen existing sidewalks to 2.5 m SUP.

Curb extensions possible.

- People who walk and bike share space on the shared use path



## **A Bike Boulevard**

This option for a shared on-road bike boulevard has painted markings and traffic calming measures combined with wayfinding signage to indicate a priority route for bikes. This is depicted in Options A1 and A2, which describe the shared roadway on the north/south streets and east/west avenues respectively. The north/south roads generally have sidewalks on both sides and 113 Avenue is missing a sidewalk on the south side. Sidewalks would be included within the boulevard of the roadways where existing, or if possible added where missing.

This type of bike facility is efficient because it does not require additional road space for bikes. The roadways in Highlands are relatively quiet and City traffic statistics indicate that drivers generally obey speed limits. The painted symbols create awareness for people who drive to watch for bikes and to share the road, but are low maintenance and do not physically disrupt traffic. Additional traffic calming measures will be added to support lower speeds within the neighbourhood which would improve the comfort for people who bike on the Bike Boulevard.

### **Benefits:**

- Low maintenance
- People who walk and bike have separate paths
- Uses existing road space
- Avoids changing sidewalks and landscaping in front of housing
- Does not disrupt existing trees and landscaping or parking

### **Trade-offs:**

- Potential for bike and motor vehicle conflicts on roadway with no physical separation
- Painted markings can be covered by snow in winter
- Lack of education regarding sharing the road can lead to confusion and conflict

## **B Shared Use Path**

Option B allows for retention of mature trees by widening the existing 1.5m sidewalks on one side of the street toward the private property to create a 2.5m asphalt shared use path. This widening would avoid disruption to mature trees in the public boulevard, but could affect private landscaping that encroaches into the public road right-of-way. No additional space is required on the road. A 3.0m shared use path is the standard width in the City of Edmonton, but limited space in the right-of-way may restrict this.

### **Benefits:**

- Retains mature trees
- Maintains on-street parking
- Separates bikes from motorized vehicles.

### **Trade-offs:**

- People who walk and bike share the path
- May disrupt private landscaping that encroaches into public right-of-way
- Potential car/bike conflicts where shared use path crosses driveways
- Frequent stopping on short block intersections, impedes biking flow



## 4.3 Streetscape and Intersection Improvements

There are several features that can be added to typical streetscapes within the Highlands neighbourhood to help address input received from the public consultation and to achieve the transportation goals of the City of Edmonton. *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards* define streetscapes holistically to balance the needs of people who walk, bike and drive. In general the local streets in Highlands have low levels of traffic volume and are driven within speed limits. This is largely due to the low density residential building forms, and efficient arterial connections of 118 Avenue and 112 Avenue crossing through the neighbourhood.

In general this report recommends widening sidewalks to 1.8m to comply with the City of Edmonton *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards*. The goal is to improve accessibility for people passing each other in wheelchairs or with strollers and to allow for walking side by side. Feasibility for sidewalk widening is assessed through review at engineering design stage of the street renewal.

### Curb Extensions

Curb extensions are traffic calming measures that narrow the road at intersections, reducing pedestrian crossing distance and prevents vehicles from parking too close to the intersection blocking visibility of people who walk and drive. Use of curb extensions is recommended at high pedestrian priority intersections to allow for shorter crossing distances and to slow down traffic. This is especially important for people with limited mobility and near schools with young children. Curb extensions also restrict parking near the corner, which helps maintain visibility for turning vehicles. In Highlands, many streets have parking on only one side of the roadway; in this situation the curb extension defines the on-street parking area on one side of the street.

#### Benefits:

- Shorter crossing distance for pedestrians
- Better sightlines for drivers and pedestrians
- Causes traffic to slow down at intersections
- Opportunity for enhanced planting

#### Trade-offs:

- Additional maintenance of planting beds
- Marginal impact to on-street parking

### Curb Radius Reduction

There are several intersections along 111 Avenue where intersections are wider than typical. These can encourage speeding for vehicles and force a wide crossing for pedestrians. An option is to shorten crossing distances by narrowing the roads at the intersection and creating more landscape area.

#### Benefits:

- Shorter crossing distances for pedestrians
- Slower traffic
- Reduce amount of hard surface, which results in less water runoff to sewers

#### Trade-offs:

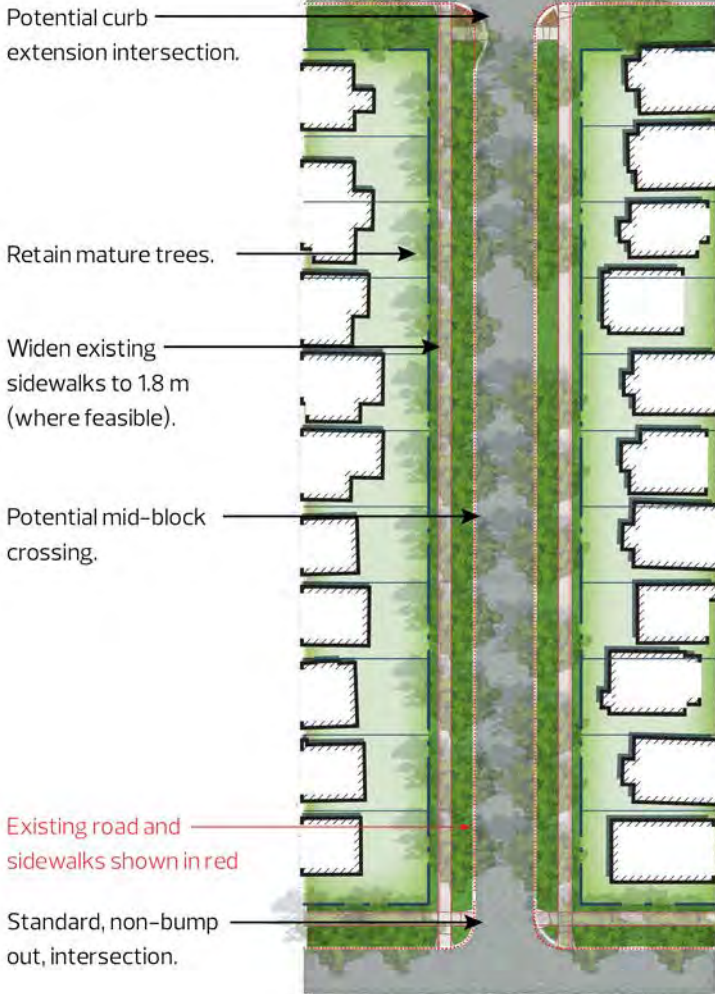
- Changes character of roadways in the neighbourhood
- Existing walkways require realignment
- Possible disruption to existing trees

Concepts to specifically address the wide intersection at 111 Avenue and 60 Street/57 Street have been provided in **4.6 Opportunities for Open Space Improvement**.

FIGURE 6 – Residential Street Renewal Concepts

**Proposed Residential Road Renewal**

**North-South Roads**



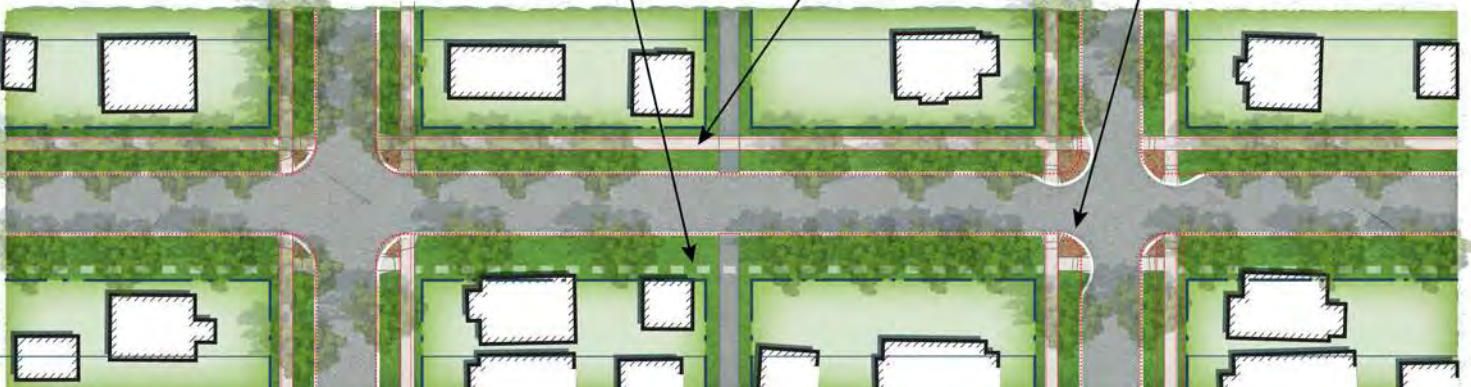
Photos  
Examples of curb extensions.

**East-West Roads**

Add 1.8 m sidewalks if site conditions allow (mature trees, side slopes, etc.)

Widen existing sidewalks to 1.8 m (where feasible).

Potential curb extension intersection.



## 4.4 Ada Boulevard Concepts

Ada Boulevard is a well-known roadway that connects Virginia Park, Bellevue, Highlands, Beverly Heights, and Rundle Heights neighbourhoods. It acts as a gateway to the North Saskatchewan River Valley and is non-standard, without sidewalks on either side, resulting in a shared space for driving, biking, walking/running and sightseeing. The street runs through all the above neighbourhoods from east of 75 Street and ends in between 38 Street and 39 Street, where it changes to 104 Avenue. Ada Boulevard is not a continuous road because it breaks between 40–44 Street due to the presence of an open space surrounding the Beverly Heights Community Hall. The scope of this study limits the design and analysis of Ada Boulevard to the area between 67 Street and 50 Street.

Under the neighbourhood renewal project, the City of Edmonton asked for public feedback to identify the ways through which the public want to be able to use and enjoy Ada Boulevard. Through several public engagement sessions, the City heard that Ada Boulevard should be a safe, shared use space for everyone.

Public comments related to **“What is Working Well”** with Ada Boulevard are:

1. Perceived 25km/hr speed limit due to signs at speed humps
2. The road is shared by people who drive, bike and walk
3. There is an access to the River Valley from the top-of-bank along Ada Boulevard
4. Speed humps help to slow traffic speeds
5. Ada Boulevard connects several neighbourhoods to the River Valley including via the Capilano Footbridge
6. Existing on-street parking on north side of Ada Boulevard is working well

Specified comments related to **“What Needs Attention”** are:

1. Speeding and high volume of traffic
2. Need measures to calm traffic and manage on-street parking
3. Provide enhanced street lighting for safety
4. Provide opportunity for placemaking, i.e., places for people to sit, gather, and view nature along the top banks of the river valley
5. Visual displays and recognition of Highlands' history and local heritage
6. Provide means for environmental management, including ecological and watershed conservation
7. Lack of wheelchair accessible parking on pocket parks on the boulevard
8. Lack of sidewalks, and separated bike lane
9. Road intersections along the boulevard are too wide
10. Presence of underutilized open spaces
11. Lack of multi-access points along the boulevard to the river valley
12. Lack of park furniture, lights, wayfinding signs, lack of identified pathways without salt and gravel. Salt and gravel erodes wheelchairs and damages wheels
13. Lack of directional signage to Capilano Footbridge
14. Trees and shrubs need to be cut and trimmed
15. Excessive garbage due to lack of bins
16. Less roadway width to accommodate motorists, walkers, and bikers
17. Improve pavement
18. Sidewalk versus no sidewalk. *“About 1/3 of respondents want to maintain the status quo along Ada Boulevard (i.e. no changes, no sidewalk), another 1/3 are recommending solutions to enhance accessibility (i.e. sidewalk) and the other 1/3 made no mention either way”* [source: City of Edmonton Ada Boulevard Reporting Back Document]





Photo  
Existing Ada Boulevard.

At present, there is no sidewalk or separated bike lane on either side of the road. Based on the feedback, four concepts are designed for redeveloping existing Ada Boulevard. In all four designs, the common design elements to align with City policies are as stated below:

1. A complete street providing safe, convenient and comfortable travel as per *The Way We Move*
  2. Access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation as defined in *The Way We Live*
  3. Street has a mix of low coniferous and deciduous trees on the south top-of-bank (TOB), which shields winds. The deciduous trees shed their leaves in winter, which allows for sun to heat a proposed path along the boulevard and provides shade in the summer. These features help to create a micro-climate and comfort along Ada Boulevard as defined in *Winter Design Guidelines*
  4. Enhancing the recreational benefits of parks and open spaces through improvements as per *The Way We Green* document
  5. Connecting open spaces to linear paths as per *Breathe-Edmonton's Green Network Strategy*
  6. Crime reduction through proper programming and maintenance of open/activity spaces as per *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*
  7. Wildlife stewardship through minor improvements, such as traffic calming, signage, curb with ramps, provision of planting beds and altered lighting- *Wildlife Passage Engineering Design Guidelines*
  8. *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards* for providing dimensions and principles of the shared use path. As per the standards, the designs "*form a network of streets that together accommodate all users and allow for efficient and high quality travel experiences*"
  9. To ensure that the river valley and ravine system is protected from urban development that may compromise its geological integrity and long-term stability- *Top of Bank Policy*
- Policy 1.08 (c)** "*A combination of continuous, uninterrupted public access (i.e. Roadway and Walkway) along the entire TOB interface*"
- Policy 1.08(g)** "*Public access to Vistas and Views along the TOB*"

The following describes four design concept options including:

- **Design Concept 1** – Shared Road ("Woonerf") with One Directional Vehicular Traffic
- **Design Concept 2** – Shared Use Path with Boardwalk (where required)
- **Design Concept 3** – Monolithic Sidewalk
- **Design Concept 4** – Demarcated Path on Roadway

## Design Concept 1 – Shared Road (“Woonerf”)

The first concept is a shared road (woonerf) design on a portion of Ada Boulevard, with the rest of Ada Boulevard being a standard roadway with a shared use path. A woonerf refers to a living street and is an urban design concept first designed in the Netherlands. A living street is envisioned to be used by people of all ages and all modes of transportation. The street is prioritized for pedestrians and vehicular traffic acts as a secondary mode of transportation. Within a woonerf, people walk on the road eliminating the need for designated sidewalks, and vehicles will drive with caution and reduced speed. The following design elements are incorporated in the woonerf concept plan:

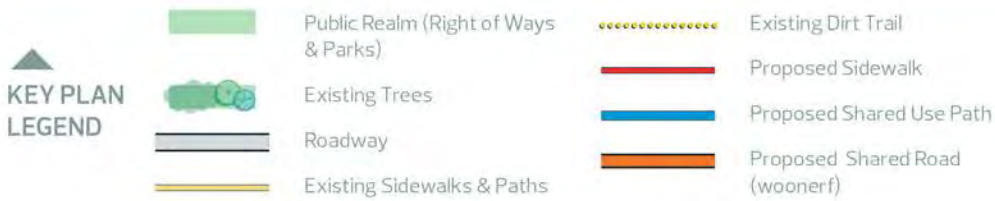
- Entry/Exit Features to depict that the road is a shared space for walking, biking and driving
  - Signs on entry and exit
  - Curb extensions at intersections
  - Raised crosswalks
- Same level space for people who walk, bike and drive by eliminating separation of spaces with raised curbs and elevation differences
- Dropped curbs at each residential walkway access to allow for universal access to the shared street
- Westbound contraflow bike lane to allow for two-way bike traffic
- Use traffic calming measures, such as low speed limit and a curvilinear driving path with obstacles, but allow enough space for emergency vehicles
  - Narrow travel lane for reducing vehicular speed
  - Breakup of a driver's sightline at every 50–60m by including visual and physical barriers such as: planters, parallel parking stalls, activity areas, bike racks and bollards
  - One-way vehicle traffic along the shared road between 62 Street and 66 Street
- Different pavement treatments to designate priority areas for people who walk and bike

Based on the design elements, the best segment identified for the woonerf concept is Ada Boulevard between Henry Martell Park and 62 Street. This strip of the Boulevard is strategically selected for the following reasons:

- It contains several historical sites, such as, Magrath Mansion and Holgate residence
- Henry Martell Park hosts the Highlandia festival and Magrath Mansion has an open house every year. These events work well with pedestrian-oriented design
- The block includes steep top-of-bank and mature boulevard trees which are barriers to other types of street concepts, but the current space is large enough for a one-way woonerf design
- The street currently functions as a shared space, so a programmed woonerf is a natural fit
- The woonerf treatment can be more costly than a standard treatment; therefore, a small portion of road may be more feasible
- Woonerf can disrupt traffic with slower speeds and obstacles, therefore a shorter treatment will minimize driver frustration along Ada Boulevard
- The proposed woonerf portion contains urban design and traffic calming treatments for three wide intersections at 62, 64, and 65 streets with Ada Boulevard
- 62 Street is proposed as the entry of the woonerf because 62 Street is also proposed as a pedestrian promenade connecting from Ada Boulevard to Highlands School. The promenade would include visual displays that represent aspects of Highlands' neighbourhood history and local heritage, along with coloured sidewalk treatments at regular intervals at the base of streetlights. A special treatment at the south end of 62 street as an entry to Ada Boulevard and the woonerf shared street is an appropriate transition



FIGURE 7 – Ada Boulevard Concept 1 – Shared Road (Woonerf)







KEY PLAN 

DETAIL LEGEND

- |   |                          |   |                                 |
|---|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Existing Face of Curb    |  | Bike/Walk Priority              |
|  | Concrete Sidewalk        |  | Seating Node                    |
|  | Proposed Shared Use Path |  | Signage                         |
|  | Shared Road              |  | Parking Stall                   |
|  | Activity Area            |  | Direction of Travel (vehicular) |



DETAIL PLAN 





The design elements and considerations for the woonerf include:

1. Lot accessibility from Ada Boulevard
2. No sidewalk on the north side of Ada Boulevard
3. The existing width of the road as 9.4m
4. Residential streets need a different design as compared to a commercial woonerf street
5. Limited room for the shared use path on the south side of the existing roadway due to river valley slope
6. As per the City's standard, the minimum width of a one-way residential traffic lane having emergency access is 3.25m
7. The minimum width of the new sidewalk is 1.8m and for a shared use path is 3.0m
8. Minimum parallel parking stall dimensions are 2.45m by 5.5m
9. Ada Boulevard as designated bike route

Based on the constraints, the reasons for specific design elements are as follows:

1. Activity area: The area may include benches, chess tables, planting beds and interpretive signage
  - Encourages people to use and stay on the street as a public space, which will promote social activity
  - Provides additional space for the Highlandia Festival near Henry Martell Park
  - Slows traffic by creating slight curves in the roadway
  - It will be on the same elevation level as the contraflow bike lane
2. Parking space
  - Parallel parking is the most feasible arrangement as per the existing road width
  - Parallel parking stalls are provided intermittently rather than continuously, so that the street should not be vehicle prominent
  - Parking spaces shall not block any existing driveway, access ways or fire hydrants
  - Parking spaces are more than 5m away from the road intersection
3. Planters are provided to define activity and parking areas, and to make the street attractive
4. The use of bollards at activity areas create safe seating and gathering spaces
5. The road in the subject area is proposed to be one-way due to limited space and to provide predictability for pedestrians knowing which way traffic is coming from

**Photo Top**  
The Armature, 96 Street, in Edmonton.

**Photo Bottom**  
Walk of Champions, 9th Street, woonerf in Canmore.



The subject portion of roadway, designed as a woonerf, is less than 600m in length to reduce driver's frustration and in consideration of potential higher costs. The one-way street is a departure from the current two-way traffic, but is necessary due to the limitations of the top-of-bank slope on the south and mature trees on the north side of the roadway. The one-way street allows adequate width for some parallel parking to remain on the street. Vehicles travelling in one direction provides road users with predictable traffic patterns, people who bike can still travel west on a contraflow bike lane indicated on the north side of the woonerf. While the woonerf strip does not need any designated walking space as the road is a shared space, a designated shared use path is included to help cyclists and joggers with an efficient route, which is not blocked by design features such as planters and benches. This design prioritizes active transportation and recognizes that Ada Boulevard is a regional bike route.

This concept covers the design elements because:

1. The street is designed for all modes of active and vehicular transportation
2. With curb ramps at each corner and dropped curbs at each private walk, the street is accessible for all types of user mobility
3. Connected open space developments, shared use path, and woonerf provide recreational benefits, linear paths and traffic calming measures to facilitate safety for both pedestrians and wildlife
4. Open spaces with ample recreational opportunities promote safety and deter crime



**Photos Above**

From top to bottom examples of: activity nodes, stamped/coloured asphalt with planters, and bioswales.

FIGURE 8 – Cross-Section: Shared Road (Woonerf)



**Shared Road (Woonerf) w/ one way traffic**

Eastbound vehicular (cars and bikes) traffic flow and westbound bikes. A winding shared road with low traffic speeds.

**Benefits:**

- The historic houses and the scenic beauty of the river valley can be enjoyed by creating a pedestrian friendly design
- During Highlandia events, the woonerf will provide an extension to Henry Martell park space
- Creates unique feature for Edmonton and Highlands with placemaking at Ada Boulevard
- Opportunities for planters will enhance the aesthetic value, bio-diversity and ecology of the area
- The design will make the street safer and accessible to everyone

**Trade-offs:**

- More costly than standard roadway infrastructure due to alternative pavement treatments, street furniture and activity areas
- One-way traffic may divert additional traffic to 111 Avenue and hinder current driving patterns
- Slower winding road could cause minor delays for emergency response services on the subject blocks
- Reduction in amount of parking space available on the road
- Some residents on Ada Boulevard may not appreciate additional attention and social activity on the street
- Winding on roadway and high pedestrian use on shared use road lowers biking efficiency



## Design Concept 2 – Shared Use Path With or Without Boardwalk

The second design concept is a 3.0m wide shared use path along the south side of Ada Boulevard between 69 Street and 50 Street. The shared use path will be separated from the roadway with a mountable curb. With increased width, families can walk together in a group as opposed to a single line. This design is more family-friendly and walkable as compared to a standard sidewalk. However, a continuous 3.0 m space will require extra road width shifted into the right-of-way abutting private residences along with widening into southern open areas along Ada Boulevard.

The existing roadway width of Ada Boulevard varies between 9.38m to 8.5m, and generally narrows when travelling east towards 50 Street from 69 Street. The steep river valley slope would be both challenging and expensive for concrete pavement construction using retaining walls. Due to slopes at several locations along Ada Boulevard, a boardwalk could be used to extend over the top-of-bank. A boardwalk provides a natural feel using wood materials and is easier to construct in the subject area. All boardwalks will have railings on the slope side, however, flat portions of the valleycrest will have an asphalt shared use path.

Specifics of the proposed concept could apply to the following street sections of Ada Boulevard:

1. Between 66–60 Streets where the existing road width is approximately 9.38m, a 3.0m shared use path will be provided by constructing the proposed boardwalk to project over the top-of-bank. The remaining 8.0m roadway will be used for one-sided parallel parking and two-way traffic
2. Between 60–53 Streets, the roadway width decreases from 9.38m to 9.13m. The proposed 8.0m wide roadway for traffic and 3.0m wide shared use path can be achieved by pushing the existing road pavement north, within the right-of-way, to gain space. This shift north would need to consider private landscaping within the public right-of-way
3. Between 53–50 Streets, where the existing road width gradually decreases to 8.5m, a continuation of shifting the roadway towards the north side of Ada Boulevard is recommended

This concept also aligns with previously identified design elements as follows:

- The street is designed for all modes of transportation
- Curb ramps provide accessibility for all users
- The 3.0 m shared use path provides a safe space for people who walk and bike
- Raised crossings at intersections will slow traffic and prioritizes pedestrians

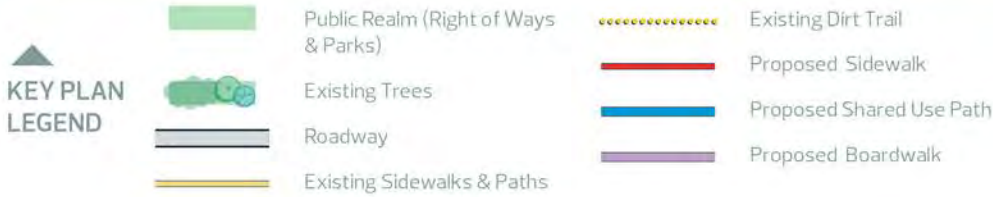
### Photo

Example of a protruding boardwalk with interpretive signage.

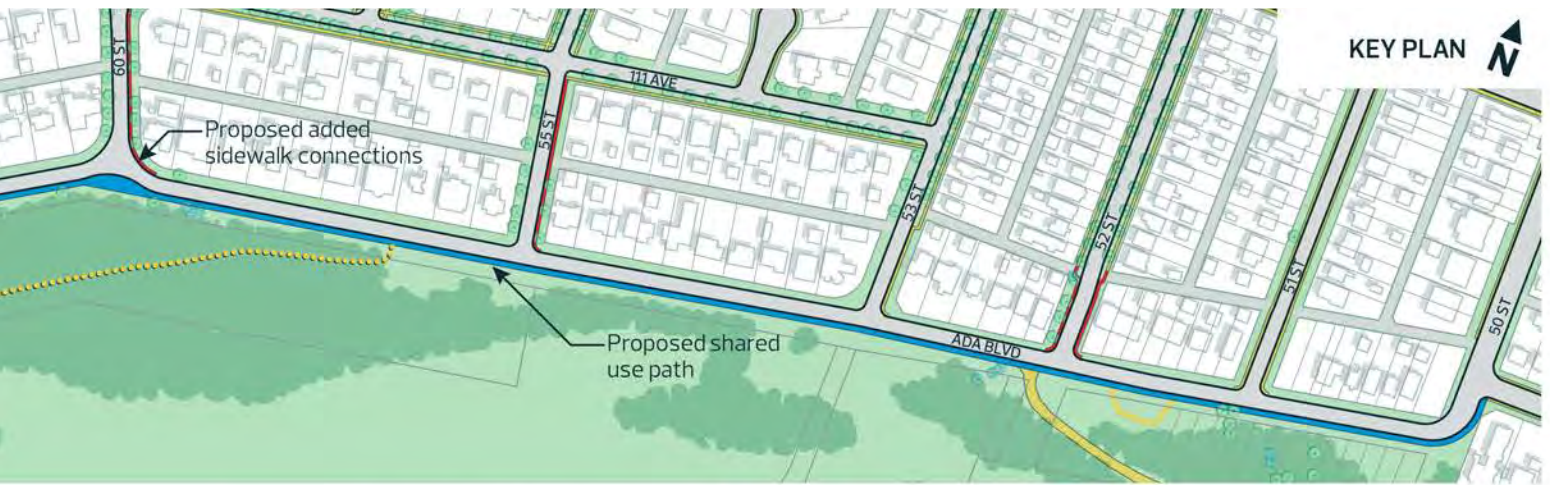













FIGURE 9 – Ada Boulevard Concept 2 – Shared Use Path/Boardwalk







- DETAIL LEGEND** 
-  Existing Face of Curb
  -  Concrete Sidewalk
  -  Proposed Plaza
  -  Proposed Boardwalk
  -  Proposed Shared Use Path
  -  Seating Node
  -  Signage
  -  Potential Public Art

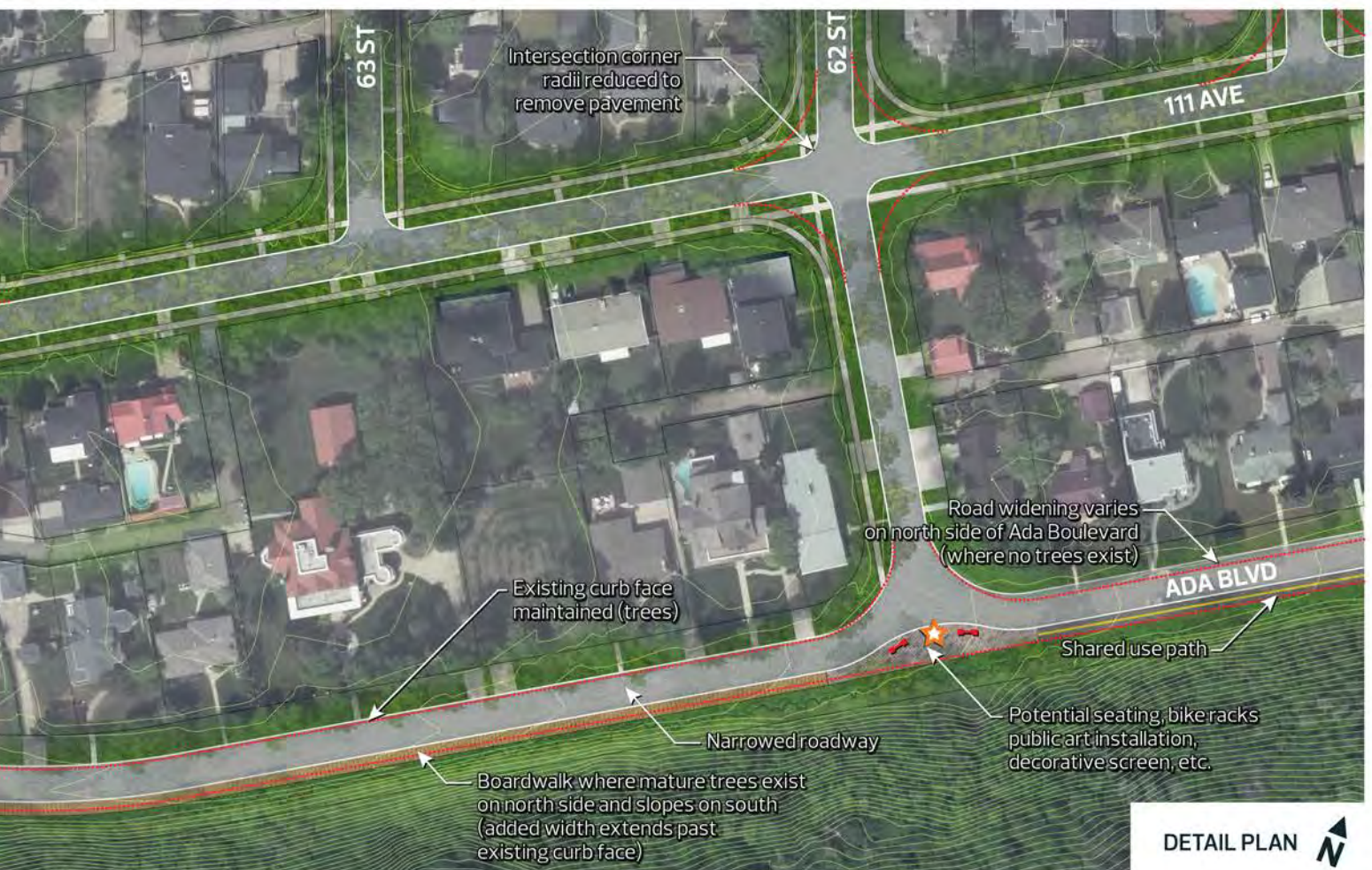




FIGURE 10 – Cross-Section: Shared Use Path



**Benefits:**

- During winter, the shared use path will be cleared and maintained by the City
- The existing valley is not significantly altered or damaged due to the use of the boardwalk
- The natural material of a boardwalk comes from a renewable resource and is appropriate adjacent to the natural river valley
- The boardwalk could include interpretive signage along its railing depicting the history of Highlands
- Sitting areas at curb extensions along 60 and 62 Street will create opportunities for social interaction
- Access to viewpoints will encourage place making
- The existing two-way road and parking one-side is retained

**Trade-offs:**

- Boardwalk would require structural testing of the top-of-bank and sound engineering to ensure it is safe
- On-street parking is limited to one side of the street
- Wooden boardwalks may require specialized maintenance
- May need to use road right-of-way on the north side to maintain road width, with potential disruption to private landscaping within the right-of-way
- Requires approval through River Valley Bylaw
- Potentially a more expensive solution than a standard sidewalk
- Boardwalks are not comfortable for some users due to spaces between boards making bumps for active users with wheels



## Design Concept 3 – Monolithic Sidewalk

The third design concept of Ada Boulevard features 1.8m monolithic sidewalk along the south side of the road. A monolithic sidewalk is immediately adjacent to the curb, without a boulevard or green space between, and are poured with the curb as a solid concrete structure. The south side is chosen for the enhancement because public input showed that there is less desire for development of a sidewalk along the north side. This is a simple solution to provide a defined pedestrian space along Ada Boulevard. The sidewalk connects all of the open spaces through a series of sidewalks and boardwalks. Mountable curb and accessible ramps are recommended on sidewalks, along with parallel parking space on the north side of the roadway and two-way traffic flow. Generally, the existing pavement area will require widening between 0.5m and 1.5m. As much as possible this widening could be evenly divided on each side of the road; however, it may be widened entirely on one side if site conditions prohibit development on one side. Potential barriers to widening include mature trees, steep front yard grades and the river valley slope.

Another possible enhancement is to install decorative metallic fencing in front of the existing guardrails at the intersection of Ada Boulevard and several streets. The guardrails are installed for safety to stop vehicles from going over the edge, but they have an industrial appearance. A low decorative metallic fence can be designed to create patterns and shapes on the ground using sunlight and shadow, and would provide visual interest to the area.

This concept also aligns with previously stated design elements because:

1. The street is designed for all modes of active and vehicular transportation
2. With mountable curb and access ramps, the street is accessible for all user abilities
3. Connected open space developments, sidewalks, and boardwalks provide recreational benefits, linear paths and reduced speed limits to facilitate safety for both pedestrians and wildlife
4. Wide open spaces with ample recreational opportunities promote safety and deter criminal activities

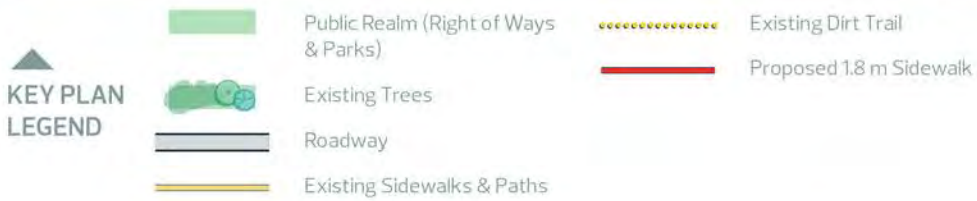
### **Benefits:**

- Creates a safer designated path for pedestrians on the south side of Ada Boulevard
- Sidewalks along the top of bank will bring people closer to the River Valley
- Curb ramps and mountable or 'roll face' curbs on both sides of the road will make the sidewalk accessible

### **Trade-offs:**

- Sidewalk designs do not include any traffic calming measures
- Bikes still share the road with cars
- The City clears snow and maintains walkways, such as shared use paths, that are 3m wide and residents are not responsible for snow removal across the street from their homes
- Does not meet City requirements for universal access and top-of-bank trail

FIGURE 11 – Ada Boulevard Concept 3 – Monolithic Sidewalk





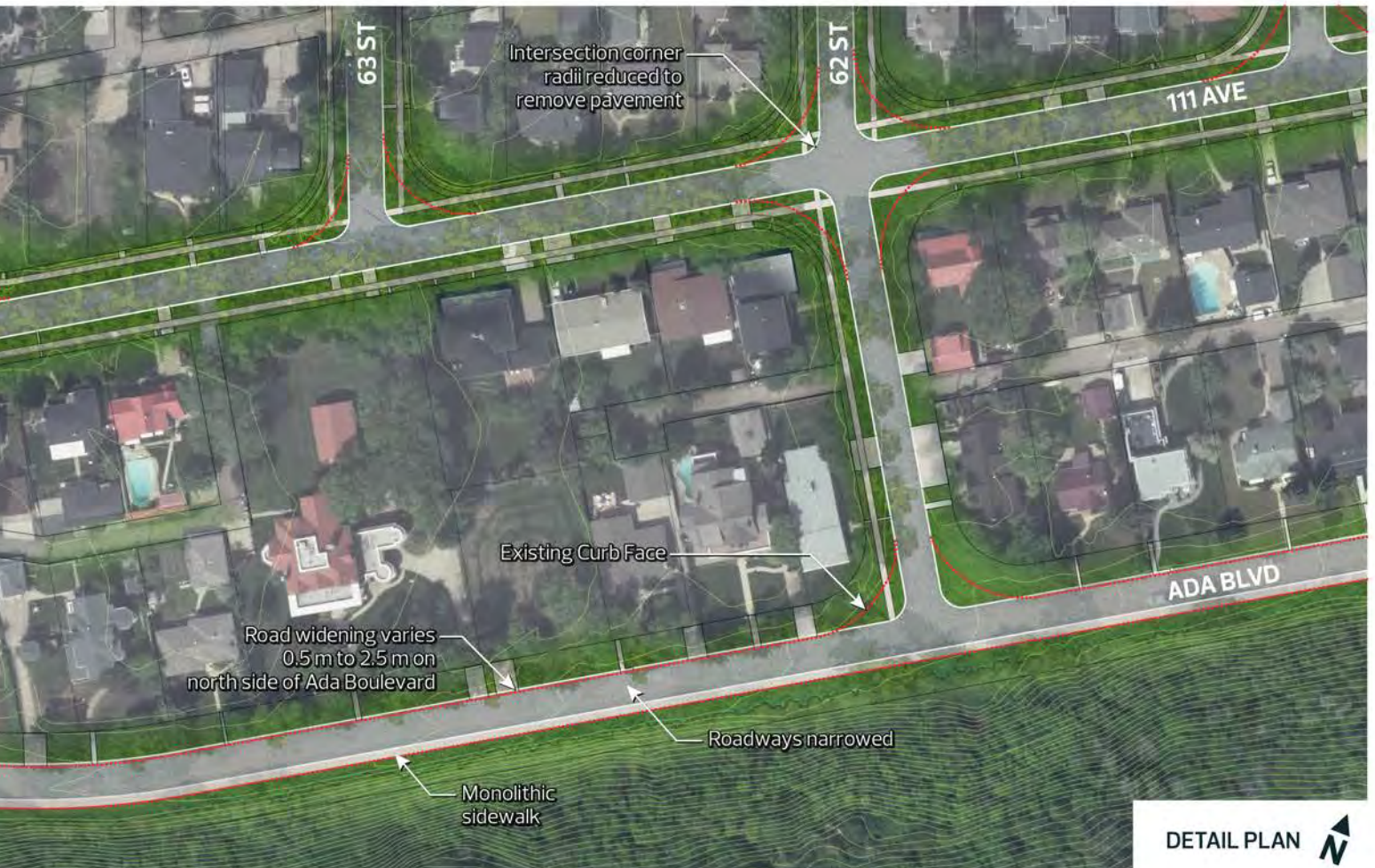
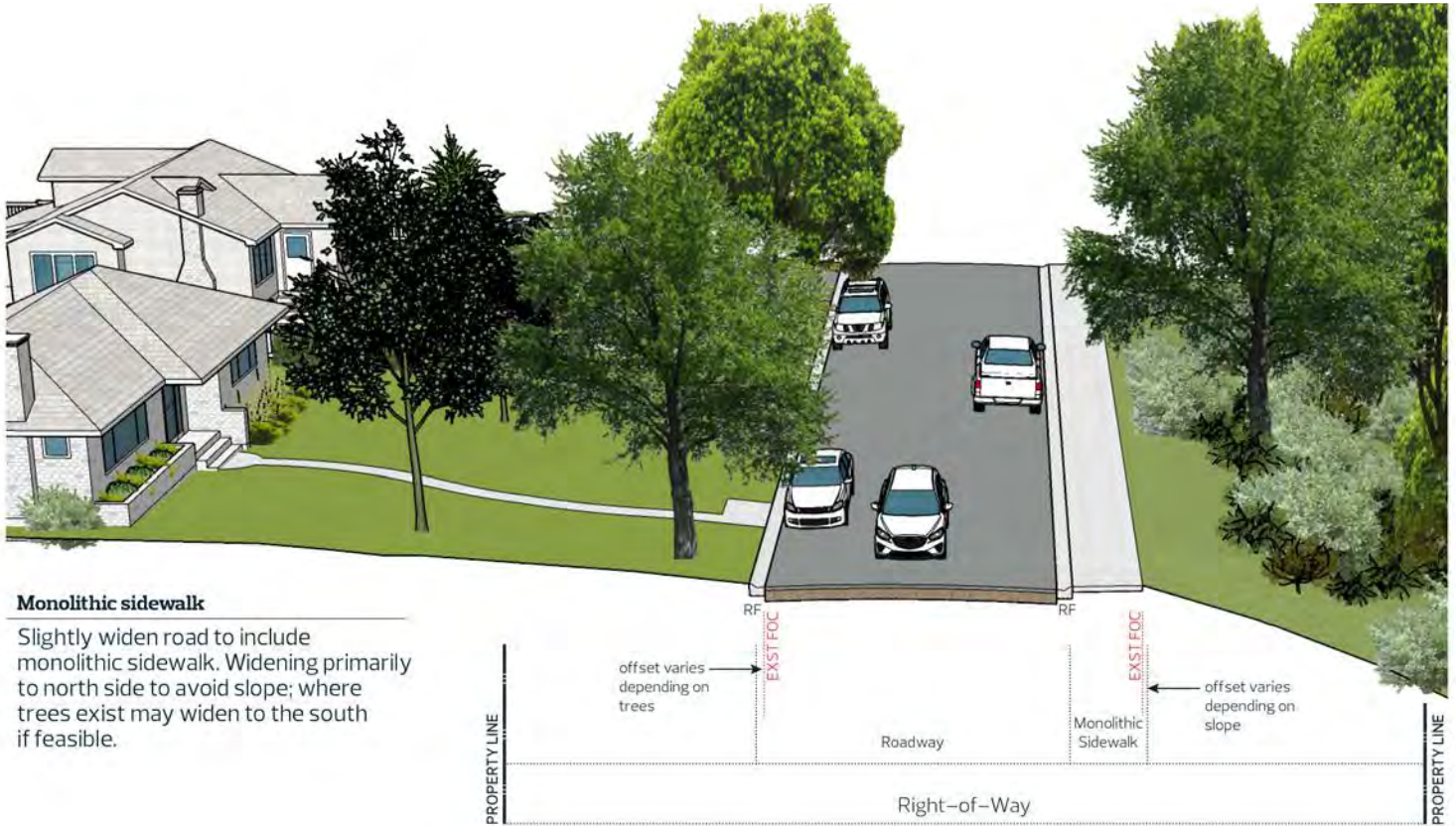




FIGURE 12 – Cross-Section: Monolithic Sidewalk



**Photo**  
Example of a decorative metal fence (in place of guard rails).



## Design Concept 4 – Demarcated Path On–Road

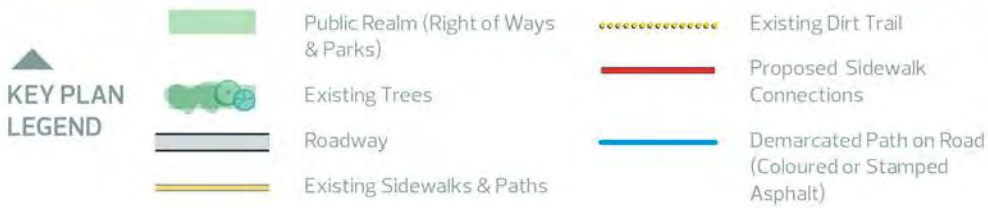
The fourth design concept uses the current road space without requiring projections or shifting the road to the north. This option proposes a 2.5m wide shared use path at the same grade elevation as the road. The 2.5m width of the existing roadway is replaced with colored stamped asphalt and leaves a minimum of 6m for cars. The purpose of this option is to demarcate a path for people who bike and walk on the roadway; maintaining a similar function to the existing Ada Boulevard. Dropped curbs at each private residential access facing Ada Boulevard are proposed to allow for universal accessibility to the roadway. Curb ramps to the open space along the river valley on the south side of Ada Boulevard may be required at regular intervals to allow universal access from the road. Raised crosswalks, instead of the existing speed humps, are proposed at intersections to calm traffic.

The colored paths delineate an area where cars should not enter and provide an awareness for drivers resulting in better safety for pedestrians and cyclists. This design will feature viewpoints on flat open spaces along the south side of Ada Boulevard. This design also adheres to the previously stated design elements because:

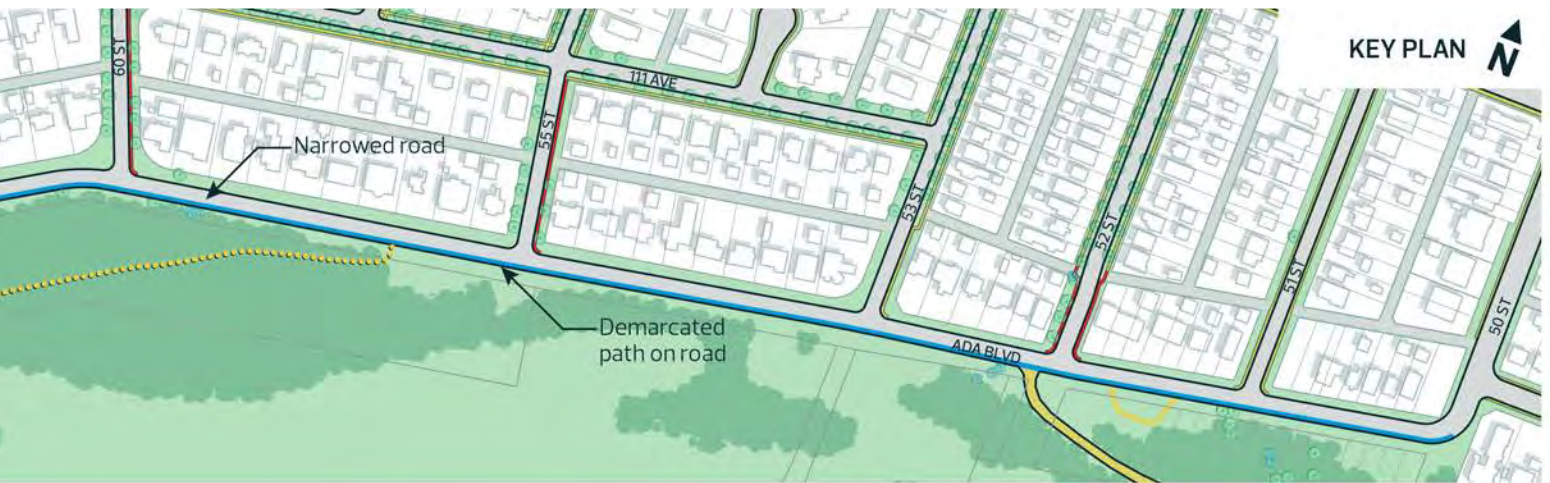
1. The street is designed for all modes of active and vehicular transportation
2. With curb ramps at corners the street is accessible for all user abilities
3. Connected open space developments provide recreational and social benefits
4. Shared use path paths of 2.5 m width promote more walking and biking in the neighbourhood. The width is limited due to maintaining the existing road width

Although this option proposes minimal changes to the existing situation it has some limitations for accessibility compared to other concepts. These include restricted access to open space due to the curb, not enough width for a standard 3.0m wide path and the 6.5m vehicular space does not allow for on–street parking. Snow removal for this option would not be prioritized because the demarcated path is not considered a shared use path.

FIGURE 13 – Ada Boulevard Concept 4 – Demarcated Path on Roadway







DETAIL LEGEND

-  Existing Curb
-  Concrete Sidewalk
-  Demarcated Path on Road (Coloured or Stamped Asphalt)

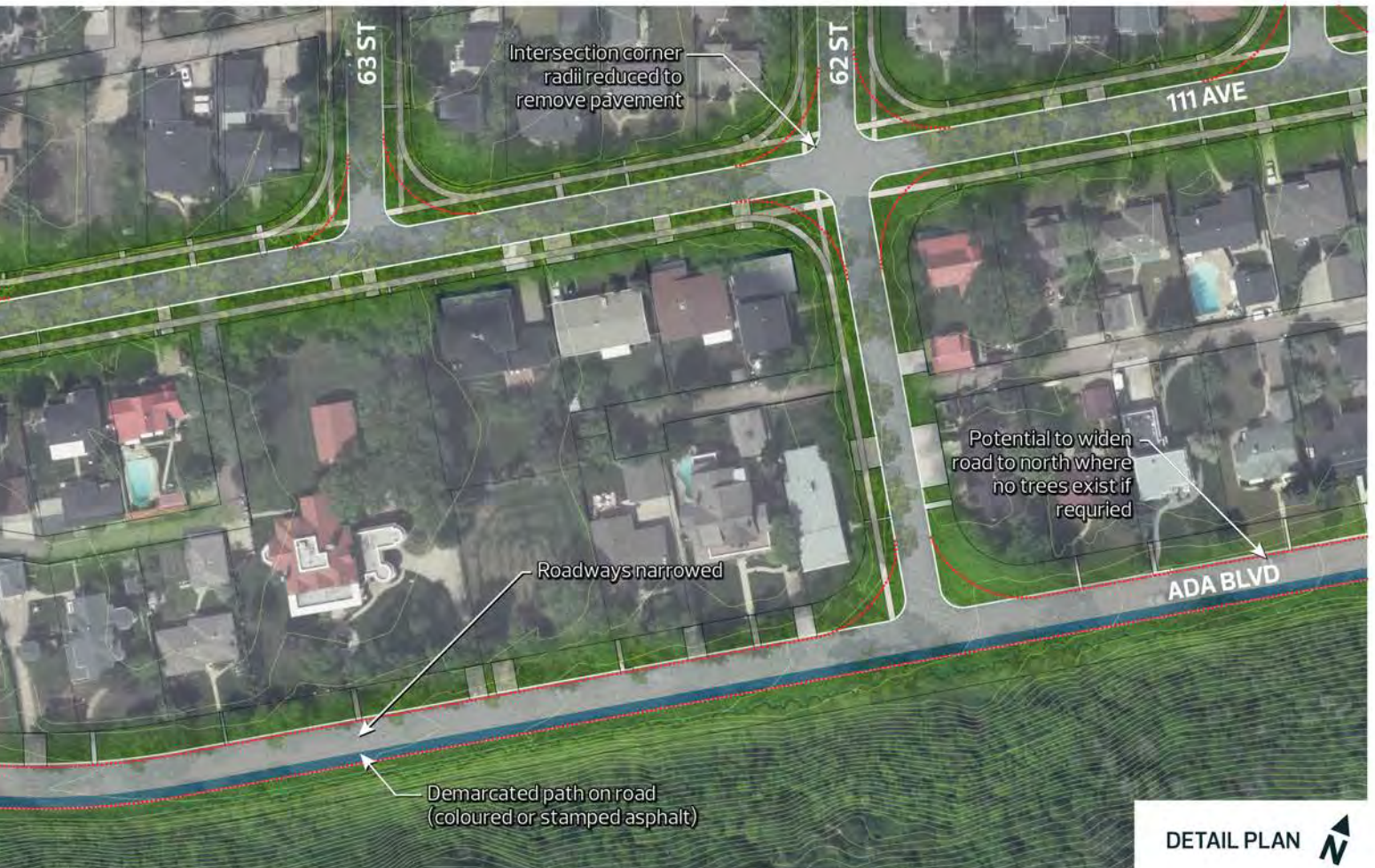




FIGURE 14 – Cross-Section: Demarcated Path



**Demarcated path on roadway**

Uses existing roadway width, adds a path on southside of road, demarcated with colour / texture

**Benefits:**

- Construction cost is less than the alternative options because it uses the existing road space
- The existing river valley area would not be disturbed by new infrastructure
- The existing two-way road is maintained in width
- Private landscaping improvements within the public right-of-way are not affected by shifting the road north

**Trade-offs:**

- Lack of elevation difference and no curb between the road and shared use path means that vehicles could drive into the unprotected shared use path
- Will not enhance pedestrian safety or traffic calming through grade separation
- Creating a designated bike and pedestrian area may cause drivers to feel more comfortable speeding
- There is no provision for on-street parking
- City operations does not consider the on-street path as high priority for snow clearing as dedicated shared use paths. Snow removal is undertaken only to maintain a 5cm snow-pack, as per the current Snow and Ice Policy



## 4.5 Elements to Reflect Character, History and Placemaking

The project team asked the public to identify what elements would best reflect local character and relevant history for their neighbourhood. The highest level of comfort reflected through responses was for historic plaques and public art that reflects the history and character of Highlands. These elements can be displayed to add a sense of place that people can identify with, take pride in, and refer to as landmarks that contribute to the neighbourhood's overall identity.



Highlands includes several places of historical significance and character which have placemaking potential as shown in **MAP 2 – Historic Assets and Street Names**. These can include parks, schools, and commercial developments, such as the Gibbard Block, and significant streets, such as Ada Boulevard.

The elements proposed in this analysis to support placemaking are public art, wayfinding signage, gateway signage, streetlight banners, decorative streetscape furniture, wrapped utility boxes, plaques, historical information boards, and benches. Depending upon the location, local character, and history, one or more of the features can be utilized. Specific neighbourhood and historic symbols and stories should be determined through further engagement with residents and the community league. Suggestions included poetry, which could be engraved within metallic banners on street poles or on street medallions inset in pavement. Another idea is to create unique manhole covers specific to Highlands.

Parks are public places that provide opportunities for beautification within the neighbourhood. Many residents enjoy visiting parks regularly, making parks great locations to create neighbourhood identities. Highlands includes several existing park spaces providing opportunities for enhancement of identity and placemaking. Features such as plazas, walkway connections, alternative coloured pavement, enhanced landscaping, information plaques, interpretive signage, and play structures can be added to encourage more use of parks and add to neighbourhood character.

Ada Boulevard offers the opportunity to include many of the identified elements of placemaking. With its connectivity to adjacent neighbourhoods and to the river valley, it can include wayfinding signage and entry gateways on its connecting sidewalks and paths, thus inviting people and providing direction. Information on plaques and boards can tell the history of the neighbourhood. Public art can be displayed within park spaces along the road. Installations could even be roughed-in to allow for temporary art pieces or for future donations or funded art following the renewal activities. If a shared street (woonerf) concept is adopted, decorative paving, planters and decorative fencing would become a feature for Highlands.

Elements such as a small gazebo could be installed at an open space along Ada Boulevard to encourage people to stop and enjoy views of the river valley. In 2017, pianos were placed along 118 Avenue and City residents stopped to play songs. A similar program could be initiated at a gazebo on Ada Boulevard where people could stop to play an instrument or paint, while gaining inspiration from the natural beauty of the river valley. Streetscape furniture, such as bike racks and benches, can be designed as functional art in prominent places, such as cow shaped benches in Buttercup Farm Park or golf themed bike rack at Henry Martell Park could be explored.

**Photo**  
Potential wayfinding signage.



To improve wayfinding, signage can be installed at the entrances to paths from the river valley along Ada Boulevard, or at proposed bike routes along 113 Avenue to help people navigate to neighbourhood focal points or to historic buildings. A map of the historical buildings and a walking route would be displayed on the sign to provide an interpretive walk. Users can take a photo of the map with their phones to follow the route or an electronic map could be prepared and provided as an on-line application with information and stories about the neighbourhood features. To acknowledge the character of historic residences in the neighbourhood brick pillars can be designed at entryways to park spaces. There could also be interpretive signage installed at the existing gazebo in Highlands Park that provides a map of where the historic buildings are located within the neighbourhood.

## Potential Gateway Features

Gateway features play an important role by providing a first impression to visitors. They can be a navigational tool to let people know that they are entering a unique area or space within the neighbourhood. Gateway features may depict entry to Highlands via Ada Boulevard near 50 Street and 67 Street. The gateway sign at 50 Street could resemble the Highlands Community League symbols. The 50 Street signage could distract people from high voltage power lines running across the open space adjacent to Ada Boulevard and could also be designed to provide a seating area. Additional gateway features could be located at the west end of Ada Boulevard at the intersection of 62 Street and Ada Boulevard where the woonerf design begins and a priority pedestrian sidewalk to the Highlands Community League, park and Highlands School is located.



## 62 Street– Highlands Promenade

An opportunity to create a new identifiable street in Highlands reflecting history and neighbourhood character would be to create a promenade sidewalk along 62 Street. 62 Street is a corridor that connects from 118 Avenue to Ada Boulevard, passing neighbourhood features including Highlands School, the Highlands Community League, and the Highlands playground and spray park. There are also historic residences along it including: Chown Residence, Grierson/Rees Residence, Humphrey Residence, Mitchell Residence and Holgate Residence. The street has sidewalks on both sides and has been identified as an important pedestrian connector. Due to the recreational open spaces and community buildings, 62 Street can be very active.

Public input identified a lack of cohesive identity between the residences on the north and south sides of 112 Avenue. The promenade could help to create a corridor that ties the two areas of the neighbourhood together.

The stories behind the historical residences and the historical buildings could be shared through attaching banners to street light poles along this street. The base of each pole could be highlighted with a coloured concrete to tie into the sidewalk. The treatment will makeover 62 Street as a feature promenade for the Highlands neighbourhood.

**Photo Left**  
Potential Highlands Gateway Feature at 50 Street and Ada Boulevard.

**Photo Right**  
Potential promenade treatment.



## 4.6 Opportunities for Open Space Improvement

### Goal

The goal of open space improvement concepts within this UDA is to express the community vision for parks through elements that reflect feedback from public engagement activities, while also achieving City policy objectives. The plans consider the physical condition, historical context, functionality and recreation requirements identified through a comprehensive series of Public Engagement events.

### Objectives

The objectives of the open space concept plans are to:

1. Align with open space policies, which are based on the City's six *"The Ways"* plans
2. Develop a concept plan to support a multi-functional network that addresses the needs of ecology, placemaking, recreation, and beauty, which supports health and wellness as per *"BREATHE: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy"*
3. Follow a collaborative planning approach by involving the City departments, residents, community leagues, school boards, and other relevant stakeholders
4. Protect the environment by stewarding the existing biodiversity and considering native species in design of existing green spaces
5. Program the open space for all ages throughout the season as per the City's *"Winter Design Guidelines"*
6. Provide universal access to open spaces following provincial *"Access Design Guidelines"*

### Planning Approach

The strategy of open space and park redevelopment is based on *"BREATHE: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy"* document. The document states that the overarching goal for parks, recreation, and open space is to preserve and enhance the environmental quality, visual beauty and connectivity of parks and open spaces within the neighbourhood by making open spaces vibrant, sustainable, functional, safe, accessible and inclusive for all through empowering the community residents. The following sections describe how each park space achieves the three pillars of *Ecology, Celebration and Wellness*.

Highlands includes several parks and open spaces throughout the neighbourhood. These open spaces are:

1. Upland areas along Ada Boulevard
2. Henry Martell Park
3. Buttercup Farm Park
4. Triangular open space at the intersection of 57/60 Street and 111 Avenue
5. Trolley turnaround on 112 Avenue, subject to rezoning and surplus of transit facility
6. Gaby Haas Park
7. Highlands School and Community Park

Mount Royal School is scheduled to close and be redeveloped, but no timeline or plan are yet in place. The plan for Gaby Haas Park to the south of the school site will depend on the outcome of the school redevelopment and will be reviewed by the City and the School Board in the future. Highlands Park has recently undergone renewal with the addition of a spray park. The Highlands Community League and Highlands School are currently undergoing redevelopment concept planning under separate studies and public engagement process. Neighbourhood renewal will coordinate with these projects as plans are developed.

As presented in the associated *"What We Heard"* report from April 2018, a vision and important elements were reviewed and refined by residents to guide the renewal efforts for their neighbourhood streets and public open spaces. The workshops also helped to identify *"What Is Working Well"* and *"What Needs Attention"* for improvement of the public open spaces. The results of these engagements are listed for each open space described in the following pages.

# MAP 10 – Open Space Improvement





## Open Spaces Along Ada Boulevard (Lookout Park at 52 Street)

A trapezoid-shaped open space exists on the south side of Ada Boulevard between 51 and 52 Street. The existing space has an isolated u-shaped bike path with bollards at the street entrances, two wooden benches on concrete bases facing the river valley, a trash can and an existing berm. On the west of the open space is the entrance to an existing bike path crossing the river valley and connecting to the Capilano Footbridge.

“*What is Working Well*” states the strengths of the open space:

1. The benches provide seating areas
2. The shared use path provides a space off the street for children to ride bikes

“*What Needs Attention*” specifies the issues of the park:

1. Additional parks for children
2. Provide viewpoint opportunities to the river valley
3. Trim back natural vegetation to provide views
4. Add benches and picnic tables

A conceptual design is proposed to add a play space which also provides a viewpoint opportunity for those who want to climb to the top and peek over the hillside trees is illustrated in **FIGURE 15 – River Valley Trailhead/Lookout Concept**. The design reflects community input and complies with the “*BREATHE*” documents. The proposed design features are as follows:

- The central berm is replaced with a soft surface, and a fabricated climbing boulder which would allow for views to the river valley without needing to cut down vegetation. Several precast boulders of differing sizes are proposed for different age groups. The boulders look like natural rock and merge well with the natural surroundings. It encourages imaginative active play in a safe, natural and unique play environment

- A wayfinding sign to highlight the entrance to the path leading to the Capilano Footbridge. This sign would welcome visitors to Highlands and could include information about neighbourhood history. It could also include a map of historical homes and features within Highlands
- The existing asphalt bike path is maintained to provide access to the park amenities
- A bike rack is proposed for those riding along the Ada Boulevard bike route to stop and take a rest

The design reflects the community input and aligns with the following pillars in “*BREATHE*”.

- “*ECOLOGY: Open spaces support a healthy and resilient ecosystem, sustaining and enhancing ecological functions*”
  - The existing trees will be maintained to preserve the diversity of trees
  - This open space development should have minimal impact on the local ecological system as the space is already defined in the existing landscape
- “*CELEBRATION: Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place. Places for communities to thrive, gather, and celebrate*”
  - Provides a place for residents and visitors to the neighbourhood to socialize
  - Children can participate in active play and games
- “*WELLNESS: Promotes healthy living, fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation and mobility*”
  - Promotes active play
  - Creates a gathering space for social interaction
  - Highlights entrance to pedestrian bridge to promote exploration and active living
  - Additional connection to future stairs down the bank for pedestrians
  - Designed to provide space for all ages

FIGURE 15 – River Valley Trailhead/Lookout Concept



**Benefits:**

- Provides a place for rest, activity and fun along the bike route
- Provides play space for children along the top-of-bank
- Design ties into the natural surroundings
- Climbing structure allows for views of the river valley
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage provides historical information to residents and visitors

**Trade-offs:**

- Play structure may require more or specialized maintenance compared to the existing grass



**Photos**  
Examples of climbing boulders.



## Henry Martell Park

The existing park is located north of Ada Boulevard near the access to Highlands Golf Course, east of 66 Street, west of 65 Street, and south of 111 Avenue. The park honours Henry Martell who contributed to the golf history of Edmonton. The park has three benches on concrete bases in the grassed area and signage on the southwest corner. The park includes a mix of mature deciduous and coniferous trees on its perimeter with an open grass area towards the south. There are no curb ramps on its edges nor walkways within the park, limiting accessibility for those with restricted mobility.

“*What is Working Well*” states the strengths of the open space:

1. The park provides open space next to quiet roadways, providing a calm space for community festivals, such as Highlandia
2. The park contains mature trees and year-round aesthetics

“*What Needs Attention*” specifies the issues of the park:

1. Additional park furniture such as garbage bins, benches and bike racks
2. Power receptacle for event equipment
3. Public art and interpretive signage

Based on the feedback, the following conceptual design is proposed. The park space is expanded by narrowing adjacent roadways and extending the curbs at the intersections. This reduces crossing distances for pedestrians and can help calm traffic speeds. Ada Boulevard to the south is also narrowed to create more grassy open space, and to further calm traffic. The woonerf concept works well at this location to provide an area for people to linger and socialize. The roadway may be closed when events take place, such as during Highlandia, with traffic detouring to other routes. The shared street/woonerf would allow for people who walk, bike and drive to share the roadway with cars at low speeds. Alternative paving treatments could be used to highlight the area as special.



A walkway and curb ramp are proposed in the northwest corner of Henry Martell Park to improve connectivity and access. The walkway connects to two existing benches within the park and carries through to the shared street. Sidewalks are added across the adjacent streets to avoid damage to mature trees in the park. An activity node is identified in the roadway, which could be a place for people to set up seating or booths during events. A functional yet artistic bike rack is proposed with this location being on a bike route. It could reflect history or identity, such as a golf theme to reflect the adjacency to the Highlands Golf Course and Henry Martell's history as a prominent local golfer. Waste receptacles are relocated near the roadway for access by City maintenance. The landscaping around the existing park sign could be refurbished through the planting of colourful flowers or shrubs.

The design reflects the community requirements and is based on the “*BREATHE*” documents. The proposed design features are as follows:

- “*ECOLOGY: Open spaces support a healthy and resilient ecosystem, sustaining and enhancing ecological functions*”
  - The existing trees will be maintained where feasible, to preserve existing features
  - More green space is added by creating curb extensions at the intersection of 65 and 66 Street and Ada Boulevard
  - Ada Boulevard along the park is narrowed for crossings by replacing road asphalt surface with green space
  - The area of the existing park sign could be enhanced with new colourful landscaping

**Photo**  
Landscape enhancement of  
Henry Martell Park signage.

FIGURE 16 – Henry Martell Park Concept



- *"CELEBRATION: Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place. Places for communities to thrive, gather, and celebrate"*
  - Unprogrammed open space in the park is preserved to allow for the annual community festival "Highlandia" and other neighbourhood events. A power receptacle could be added for event equipment
  - The concept encourages walkability by adding connections and by proposing an internal path and a concrete sidewalk along the west side of 65 Street
  - The concept provides opportunity for placemaking through implementing a woonerf on Ada Boulevard
  - Trees will be maintained, which will retain natural aesthetics
- *"WELLNESS: Promotes healthy living, fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation and mobility"*
  - The design would attract pedestrians and encourage visitors due to its connectivity from nearby existing sidewalks and adjacency to Ada Boulevard. Increased visits from pedestrians promotes healthy living by encouraging active travel modes
  - Preservation of existing trees increases connectivity to nature, which can reduce stress
  - Event space would foster social well-being among local residents and visitors

**Benefits:**

- The design will encourage placemaking due to increased connectivity and pedestrian only space



## Buttercup Farm Park

Triangular-shaped Buttercup Farm Park is located north of 58/60 Street and 112 Avenue. The following is a description of the history of this park, and is included on the existing park naming sign. *“The park got its name from the annual splash of bright yellow blossoms, which in the early 1900’s, defined the eastern boundary of an acreage that extended from 57 to 60 Street between 112 and 118 Avenue. The original farmhouse was built in 1912 and is still a prominent landmark at 11243 58 Street. ‘The Smiths’ (1918–1942) nurtured the flowers, raised chickens and owned a cow named Buttercup. There was a strip of land that ran from 112 Avenue to the farmhouse which was completely covered with flowers many of which were yellow.”*

Based on public input, *“What is Working Well”* states the following strengths of the park:

1. The park is safe, open, well-maintained and has flowering trees
2. The park signage tells the history of the farm
3. Maintain passive open space

*“What Needs Attention”* lists considerations for what needs to be addressed for the park:

1. Lack of benches and park furniture
2. Lack of sidewalk access to the park and pathway connectivity within it
3. Lack of public art, park features and interpretive signage reflecting the history of the farm

The overall purpose of the park improvements are to reflect the history of the neighbourhood space, create placemaking and to provide a passive space for meeting and relaxing. Based on these considerations, the concept for Buttercup Farm Park proposes a central seating area, connected to the surrounding streets by walkways and with a pedestrian crossing at the south tip of the park. The roadway is realigned to improve visibility and vehicle turning movements from 58 Street. 113 Avenue north of the park is proposed to be closed to increase the green space and a stamped asphalt shared use path is proposed to continue the proposed 113 Avenue bike route. Further consultation with the adjacent residents is required to consider closing 113 Avenue. Additional tree



planting is proposed to line the south side of 113 Avenue subject to a comprehensive landscaping plan approval. These trees could be part of the corporate responsibility program to replace trees that are damaged or removed from other parts of the neighbourhood during the renewal activities.

The central bench seating is focused around a pattern of a buttercup flower created using paving stones or coloured concrete. A pedestrian-scale light pole would be installed for nighttime visibility. On the west side of the plaza art installations are proposed that could depict the cow named Buttercup. Buttercup flowers could also be planted at the base of the art installations.

The redesign of the park adheres to the strategic principles specified in the *“BREATHE”* document. The redesign features are as follows:

**Photo**  
Existing aerial photo of  
Buttercup Park.

- *“ECOLOGY: Open spaces support a healthy and resilient ecosystem, sustaining and enhancing ecological functions”*
  - Planting trees: Additional deciduous trees could be planted along the south of the removed 113 Avenue. The trees would allow sun to reach the amenity space during winter once leaves have fallen and will provide shade during summer (Winter Design Guidelines, City of Edmonton)
  - The existing intersection of 58/60 Street will be narrowed via curb extension to encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment and would include enhanced landscaping
  - The existing trees would be retained to preserve the diversity of trees and ecology
- *“CELEBRATION: Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place. Places for communities to thrive, gather, and celebrate”*
  - A circular plaza at the center of the park is proposed. The floor of the plaza could have a design which resembles a buttercup flower. The yellow color of the flower and surrounding areas could be paved using coloured asphalt, concrete, or paving stones. The plaza would be surrounded by a circular pathway and include three benches. The plaza would be accessible via trails from three directions to improve access
  - The park could include public art consisting of metallic sculpture in the form of a cow along with an interpretive board. The public art installation would be surrounded by seasonal buttercup flowers to reflect the namesake of the park and former farm
  - The plaza and public art will bring attention to the park space, creating a neighbourhood destination by enhancing its aesthetic values and honoring the heritage of the farm
- *“WELLNESS: Promotes healthy living, fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation and mobility”*
  - The park will be well connected to the neighborhood through the shared use path to the north, additional sidewalks, and internal pathways. The portion of 113 Avenue adjacent to the north edge of the park will be transformed to a shared use path via colour-stamped asphalt. A bike path along 113 Avenue is proposed, which supports the transformation of the roadway to a shared use path
  - Two benches, facing into the park, are proposed along the north side of the shared use path. The shared use path could include pedestrian-scale light poles to improve security and surveillance in front of the existing house
  - An additional 1.8m wide sidewalk is proposed along 60 Street connecting to the internal sidewalks and a crossing added at the south tip to the east side of 58 Street where curb extensions realign the intersection to enable better turning movements and visibility for motorists
  - The existing floral trees and the proposed large canopy trees on the north side of the park provide shade and beauty for the park space

**Benefits:**

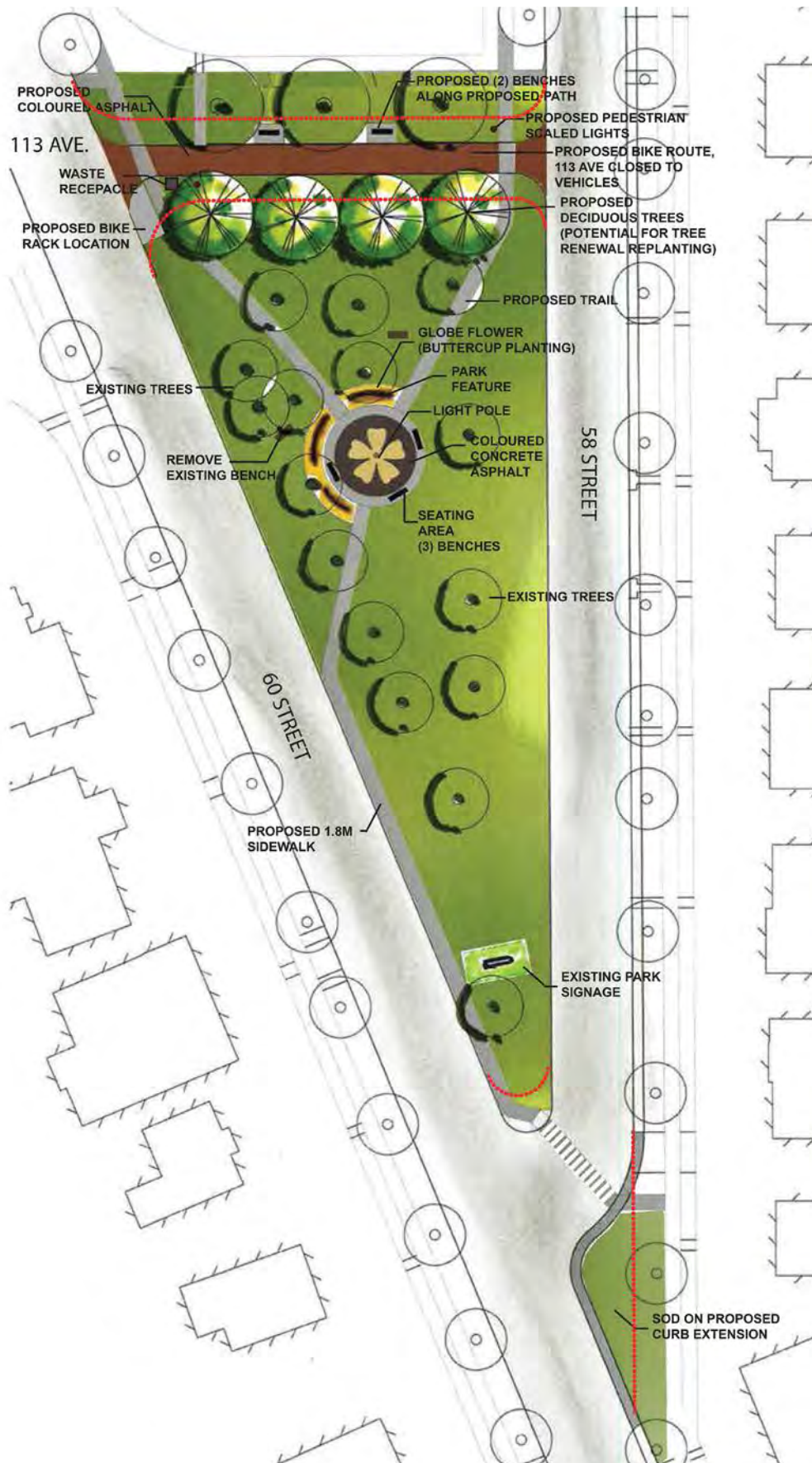
- The design concept informs about and reflects the history associated with the park
- Enhanced connectivity of the park through proposed shared use path, walkways and curb extension with surrounding streets increases accessibility and use
- Road closure and curb extensions increase the amount of open space

**Trade-offs:**

- Additional impermeable walkway surface increases drainage run-off to sewers and increases park maintenance
- Loss of vehicular connection on 113 Avenue
- Loss of parking opportunity on 113 Avenue



FIGURE 17 – Buttercup Park Concept



FEATURE PLANTING  
COMMON GLOBE (BUTTERCUP)



POSSIBLE PARK FEATURES



PARK FURNITURE



COLOURED ASPHALT

## 57/60 Street & 111 Avenue Intersection Open Space

This open space is located at the five way intersection of 57 and 60 Street along 111 Avenue. The triangular open space is part of the road right-of-way and is not zoned as park. It has mature deciduous and coniferous trees as well as a sidewalk along 60 Street and along a portion of 111 Avenue.

*“What is Working Well”* states the strengths of the open space:

1. It is located near an entry road to Ada Boulevard, facing 111 Avenue, which was formerly named Jasper Avenue.
2. The space includes mature trees and shrubs providing a natural setting

*“What Needs Attention”* specifies the issues of the open space:

1. The internal space lacks accessibility due to lack of pathways
2. A wide five-way intersection could create traffic confusion and is a long distance for pedestrian crossings
3. The space lacks identification as a public park and could be considered a private yard for the adjacent residence
4. Trimming of existing trees and shrubs would improve accessibility and surveillance from the roadway
5. The green space could be increased in size and traffic improved by closing vehicular access from 57 Street to 111 Avenue

Based on the public input, two conceptual designs are proposed. Each design addresses different community feedback and is based on the *“BREATHE”* policies. The proposed design features of Concept 1 and 2 are as follows:

### Concept 1

1. The curvilinear edge of the open space along 111 Avenue between 57/60 Street is flattened and extended to reduce the road width of 57 and 60 Street. This design will also create a better defined intersection of 57 Street, changing the five-way to a four-way intersection
2. The flattened edge has a proposed 1.8m sidewalk along 111 Avenue, which will provide connectivity to the existing adjacent sidewalks along 111 Avenue and 60 Street
3. A 1.5m wide C-shaped path, connected via existing sidewalk along 60 Street, is proposed at the central location of the open space
4. It is proposed that a path with two benches and one game board table could be installed to enhance the space and user experience
5. The curbs along the NW and SE corners of the intersection are extended to enable traffic calming and shorten pedestrian crossing distances
6. All of the existing mature street trees could be preserved



FIGURE 18 – 111 Avenue and 60 Street Intersection Concept 1

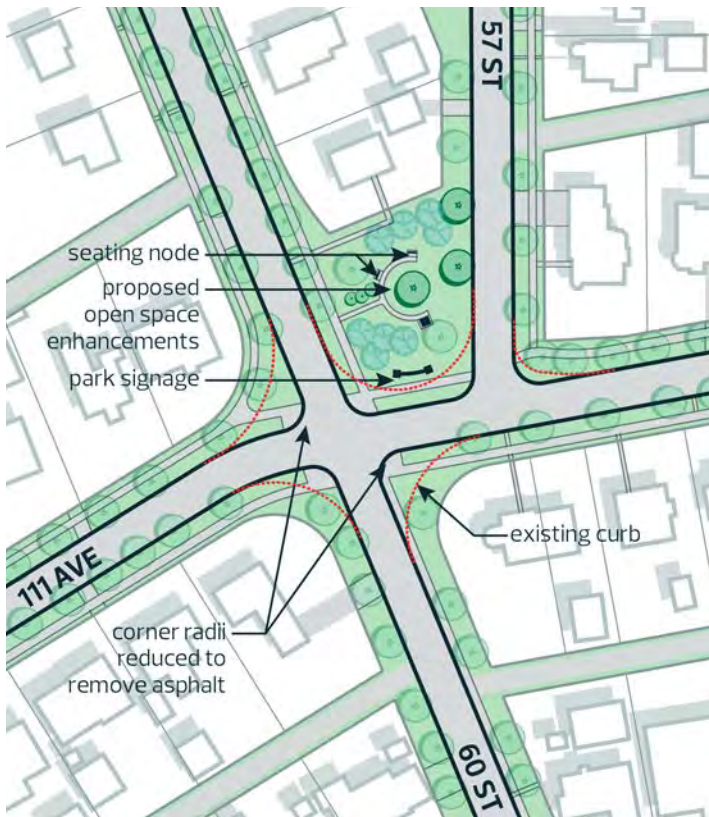
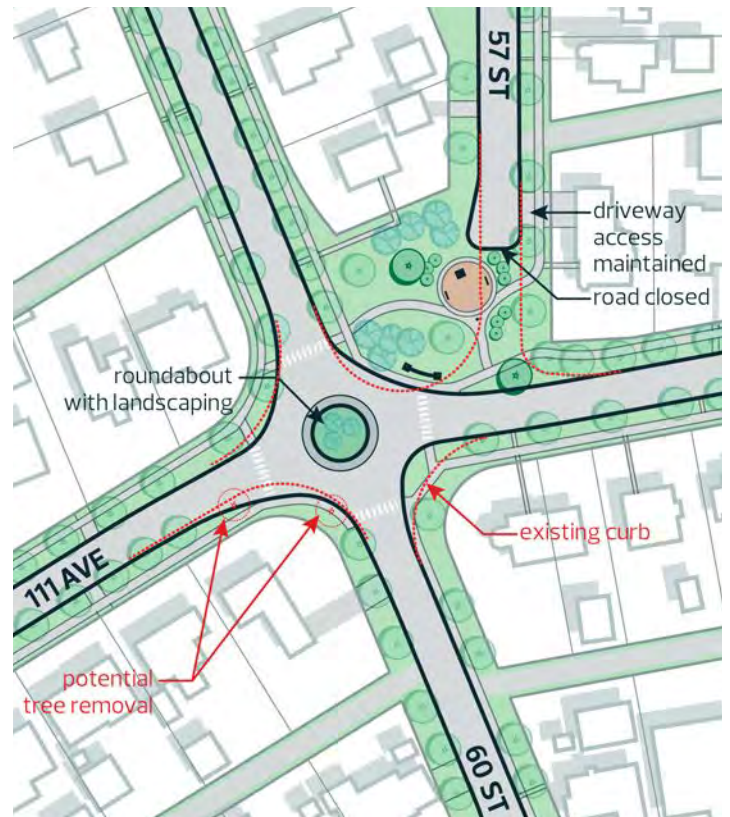


FIGURE 19 – 111 Avenue and 60 Street Intersection Concept 2



**Concept 2**

1. The proposed design closes the south end of 57 Street permanently. The road closure would maintain the driveway access of the property flanking 57 Street and 111 Avenue
2. The existing mature trees are preserved in the open space. Additional landscaping could be planted
3. The existing lane is proposed to be used as a secondary access for traffic and emergency vehicles
4. Road closure adds more permeable green space and converts the five-way intersection to a four-way intersection
5. A landscaped roundabout could include sculpture/public art and is proposed for traffic calming and beautification at the intersection
6. A plaza with a game table and two benches and pedestrian-scale park lights are proposed

7. The plaza will be well connected via meandering pathways to existing and proposed new sidewalks
8. A proposed new sidewalk along 111 Avenue would connect the existing sidewalks along 60 Street and 111 Avenue
9. Park signage could be installed northeast of 60 Street and 111 Avenue within the open space to enhance wayfinding and placemaking

The features of the two design concepts along with their alignment to the "BREATHE" documents are:

- *"ECOLOGY: Open spaces support a healthy and resilient ecosystem, sustaining and enhancing ecological functions"*
  - The existing trees will be maintained to preserve the diversity of trees in both concepts
  - In Concept 2, more green space is added due to the 57 Street road closure

- *“CELEBRATION: Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place. Places for communities to thrive, gather, and celebrate”*
  - Both concepts encourage walkability via connections to existing and proposed pathways. Concept 1 also reduces crossing distances
  - The concepts provide an opportunity for placemaking through addition of park furniture
  - While Concept 1 provides traffic calming through curb extensions, Concept 2 provides a different form of calming with the roundabout
  - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles are followed in both concepts by suggesting trimming of low branches on existing trees to increase passive surveillance and sightlines into the park
- *“WELLNESS: Promotes healthy living, fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation and mobility”*
  - The plaza in Concept 2 could attract pedestrians and encourage walkability due to its connectivity to existing sidewalks. The C-shaped path could provide a similar opportunity. In both concepts, enhanced walkability promotes healthy living
  - Preservation of existing trees will provide connectivity to nature. In Concept 2, due to the increase in green space, there is an opportunity to add more plantings
  - The addition of recreational activities, through a board game table and comfortable benches, would foster social well-being among local residents and visitors

**Benefits:**

- Concept 1
  - Existing space is enhanced without changing existing road accessibility from 57 Street
  - Less expensive compared to Concept 2 due to fewer design features and changes
  - Mature trees are retained to preserve existing habitat
- Concept 2
  - The green space is increased due to road closure and could provide more recreational open space
  - A landscaped roundabout could provide both traffic calming and beautification of the intersection
  - Mature trees are maintained to preserve existing habitat
  - Closure of the 57 Street access reduces potential driver conflict with close intersections

**Trade-Offs:**

- Concept 1
  - The proposed concept has roads on three sides, limiting open space area and calmness for park users
- Concept 2
  - Road closure may affect emergency services accessibility via 111 Avenue and local residents along 57 Street
  - Road closure could increase vehicular traffic along the alley due to short-cutting
  - The proposed public art and landscaping at the proposed roundabout require extra maintenance and could cause driver distraction
  - May require tree removal to accommodate roundabout and sidewalks



## Transit Turnaround Open Space

A former trolley turnaround is located on the southeast corner of 61 Street and 112 Avenue intersection. The space was built to provide a turnaround loop for the Route No. 2 streetcar. Route 2 had a white route sign and ran from 61 Street and 112 Avenue, where it used to turn around to continue its route to Bonnie Doon via the High Level Bridge during the 1930s to 1950. The current space has a functioning washroom for ETS staff, which is screened by seasonal shrubs, a bus stop with ETS bench and two other benches, as well as trees and shrubs in the middle of an asphalt roadway. There is a house located on the adjacent lot.

In general there was not a lot of public support in workshops for redevelopment of the ETS space. Redevelopment of this site is subject to rezoning and surplus of the transit facility. There was less than 50% support for creation of a pocket park and addition of interpretive signage. Due to its relatively isolated location on a busy road, it may be a consideration for the City to sell this land for future development.

*"What is Working Well"* states the strengths of the open space:

1. The open space has deciduous trees and existing benches
2. The washroom building is hidden from general view
3. The space has opportunity for local gathering

*"What Needs Attention"* specifies the issues of the open space:

1. The turnaround space is unused and has the potential to function as an event location
2. Lack of sidewalk access to the space and pathway connectivity within it

The redesign of the park adheres to the strategic principles specified in the *"BREATHE"* document. The redesign features are as follows:

- *"ECOLOGY: Open spaces support a healthy and resilient ecosystem, sustaining and enhancing ecological functions"*
  - The existing trees and shrubs should be maintained to preserve the diversity of trees. The site works as a stepping stone for wildlife to get to other treed areas
- *"CELEBRATION: Connects people to each other and builds a sense of place. Places for communities to thrive, gather, and celebrate"*
  - The turnaround at the open space is proposed to be a pedestrian-only space with the addition of coloured asphalt surface and knock-down bollards at its entries
  - The space is proposed to be used for temporary display of local art to encourage placemaking and celebration of local artists
- *"WELLNESS: Promotes healthy living, fosters wellbeing through diverse kinds of recreation and mobility"*
  - The coloured path will attract pedestrians and encourage entry due to its connectivity from existing sidewalks
  - Local artists will have a space to display their art, which could improve their economic well-being, as well as mental wellness and pride
  - Preservation of existing trees provides a connection with nature, reducing stress and improving moods

FIGURE 20 – Transit Turnaround Concept



COLOURED ASPHALT

POTENTIAL LOCAL ARTISTS' DISPLAY

**Benefits:**

- The design concept provides an opportunity for a temporary art display to beautify the neighbourhood and display local talent
- The design will encourage placemaking with exposure on a highly visible traffic route
- Adding a name to the park would help with placemaking and wayfinding
- Creating a gathering space increases opportunity for social interaction
- This space is currently underutilized

**Trade-offs:**

- The conversion of the turnaround to a recreational plaza space would force the ETS bus to block one lane of traffic along 112 Avenue when the existing ETS staff washroom is in use
- 112 Avenue is a busy arterial road. An increase in public activity along the turnaround may require traffic calming at the intersection of 61 Street and 112 Avenue, such as curb extensions and pedestrian crossing signals





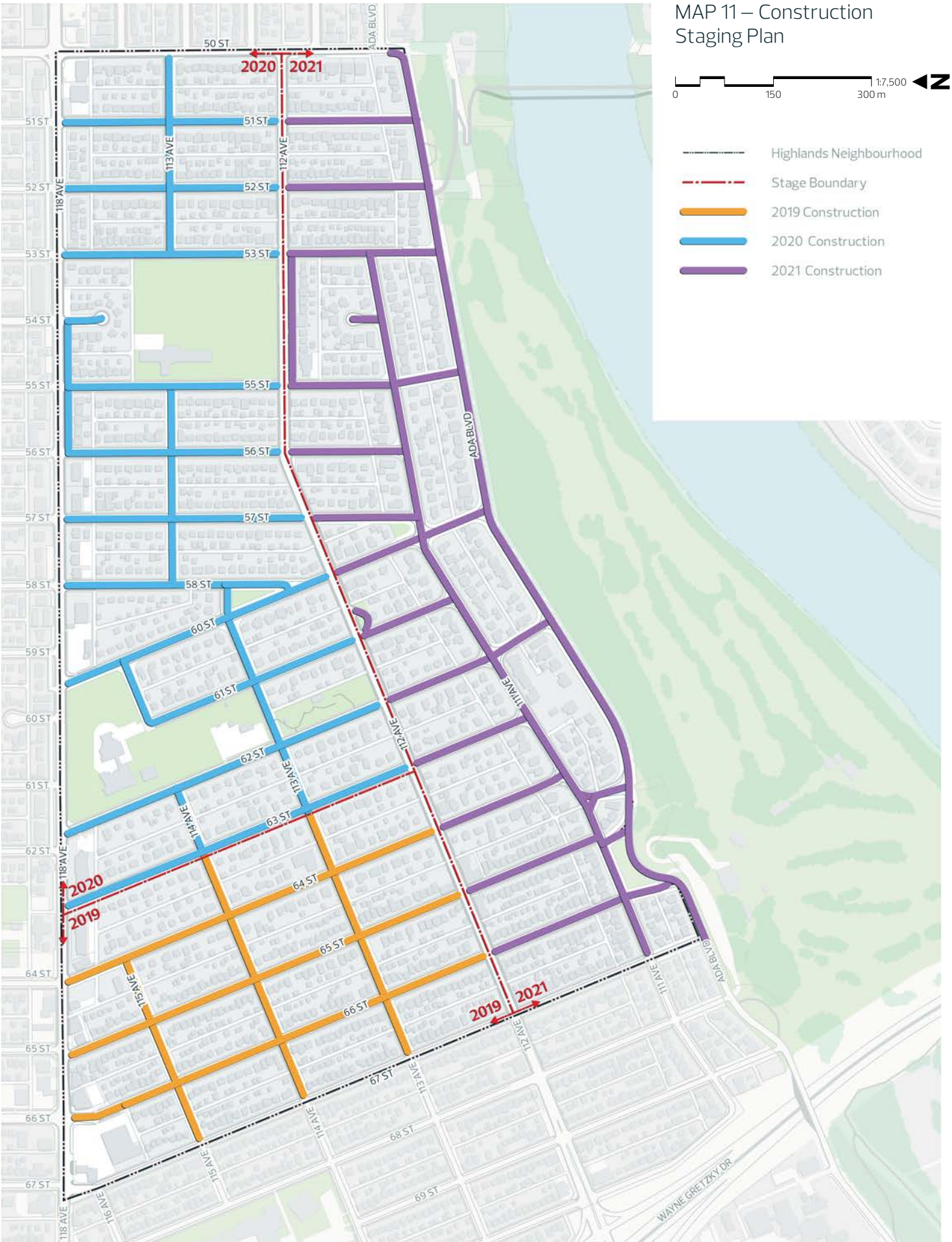
## 5 Next Steps

The next steps for renewal in Highlands will be to prepare and present the preliminary plans using the event feedback. The final project decisions will also consider technical constraints, City policies and programs, and available budget. In January 2019, an information session will be held to inform residents about the detailed construction plans. Construction will be staged over 3 years throughout the neighbourhood, as shown in **MAP 11 – Construction Staging Plan**, until the fall of 2021, at which point Highlands will have completed the renewal process. To find more information, please visit: [www.edmonton.ca/BuildingHighlands](http://www.edmonton.ca/BuildingHighlands).

### Photo

Community members providing input at the Highlands Pop Up Event in June 2018.

# MAP 11 – Construction Staging Plan









Highlands  
Neighbourhood Renewal

# URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

BUILDING GREAT  
NEIGHBOURHOODS

Edmonton