

103 Avenue Streetscape Project

from 100 to 101
Street

| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

December 2020

This is your city.

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

We believe engagement leads to better decision-making.

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

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

We will show you how you help influence City decisions.

Share your voice with us and shape our city.

About the Project

103 Avenue links people to two key areas of our city: Ice District and the Civic Precinct. 103 Avenue connects us to the Royal Alberta Museum, Winspear Centre, City Hall, and Stanley A. Milner Public Library—as well as office towers, restaurants, hotels, and the Valley Line–South LRT. 103 Avenue also connects hundreds of Edmontonians to their homes.

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

Project Area Limits



From August to October 2020, Edmontonians shared their ideas and thoughts about the City's Concept Plan for 103 Avenue, based on the vision developed in previous engagements.



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

What Was Done

Public and stakeholder events planned for spring of 2020 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Public and stakeholder engagement resumed in a modified fashion in August and excluded any in-person engagement. Virtual stakeholder interviews, a stakeholder workshop, as well as an online survey were delivered. The concept plan was presented to get the perspectives of stakeholder and the public for the 103 Avenue Streetscape project. Participants were reminded of the goal to have 103 Avenue become a green and walkable street, according to the Capital City Downtown Plan.

<p>103 Avenue Streetscape Project</p> <p>Public and Stakeholder events</p>	<p>STAKEHOLDER ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS</p> <p>Virtual meetings August–October 2020</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER CONCEPT PLAN FEEDBACK WORKSHOP</p> <p>July 30, 2020</p> <p>ONLINE SURVEY</p> <p>August 11–24, 2020</p> <p>The survey was advertised through posters, A-frame street signs, and a Global TV feature, with an interview by Ali Alou.</p>
<p>Contact information</p>	<p>Ali Alou, Project Manager, City of Edmonton 103Avenue@edmonton.ca 780-442-3312</p>
<p>Level of public engagement</p>	
<p>Description</p>	<p>The Project Team's public engagement process followed the direction of the City of Edmonton during a world-wide pandemic. All in-person and virtual engagement were put on hold from mid-March to August. Once permitted to conduct engagement activities, the process honoured the City of Edmonton's commitment to "involve the people affected by the decisions it makes" and "seek diverse opinions, experiences, and information so that a wide spectrum of information is available to decision makers." https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/public-engagement.aspx</p> <p>Decision makers commit to incorporating stakeholder and public input into the Concept Plan and demonstrate how their input was used. In instances where the Project Team is unable to incorporate the input, decision makers will communicate the constraints that led to the decision.</p> <p>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES</p> <p>The objectives of Public Engagement in the Phase Two of the concept phase are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Re-introduce the project to the public and stakeholders + Build on the relationships formed during the Visioning phase that will last for the duration of the project and after + Seek feedback and perspectives on Concept Plan

What We Heard

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND WORKSHOPS

Stakeholders were engaged through one-on-one virtual interviews and a Stakeholder Workshop. The 103 Avenue Concept Plan was shown, followed by discussion. Overall, stakeholders were very supportive of the project, and offered the following feedback:

- + **Level, walkable space was endorsed**, particularly by the Churchill Revera.
- + **Drop off zones** in front of Churchill Revera were seen to be much safer; parallel parking in front of businesses was supported.
- + **Creating a connection through a consistent look** was encouraged. Ensure that the look and feel of the alley of Joey's Bell Tower is carried through on 103 Avenue to 100 Street. It was suggested that the City pay particular attention to the cross walks and try to 'match it up.' Stakeholders cited the intersection at 101 Street and 102 Avenue as a vast improvement to the area and encouraged the team to consider a similar design for the 103 Avenue plan.
- + **Lighting:** Consistency once again was discussed as it related to lighting, Stakeholders suggested that the same lighting being used in Ice District be carried through the 103 Avenue Concept Plan. Pedestrian level lighting, as shown in Ice District was supported. Lights strung across the streets were endorsed although stakeholders understood the constraints to doing that. Lighting in and around trees was endorsed.
- + **Seating:** Well planned seating and landscaping will uplift the avenue and make it feel like a community. Ensure seating areas are safe and well designed so that loitering or hiding in landscaping is discouraged.
- + **Pedestrian signals on 100 Street and improved traffic signals on 101 Street** were encouraged to mitigate traffic backing up from the parkades, as well as to increase pedestrian safety.
- + **Alley improvements** were desired. Although stakeholders were pleased to see that increased lighting would be in the alley, they had hoped for a stronger alleyway treatment. Concern was expressed that an active area outside the alleyway, adjacent to the Churchill Revera, would draw vulnerable populations into the alley.
- + **Beautification** was applauded. People agreed that it would represent a vast improvement to the area. Emphasis was placed on patio space, particularly outside of the former Rose and Crown. Potential tenants intend to continue with a restaurant/pub concept, which could potentially have a patio.
- + **Tour and Entertainment Busses:** Stakeholders asked for assurance that the busses used by tour operators, sports teams, and entertainers would continue to have the opportunity to park outside of the Allard lot. The City outlined the process that would be in place for that to occur.
- + **Timing of construction and completion** was discussed. The City introduced the process that would be used to communicate with stakeholders once construction was scheduled to begin. Construction will begin the spring of 2021 and will be completed in fall of 2021.
- + **Open Communications:** Continue to meet with stakeholders to ensure coordination with their improvements to their building.

Online Public Survey

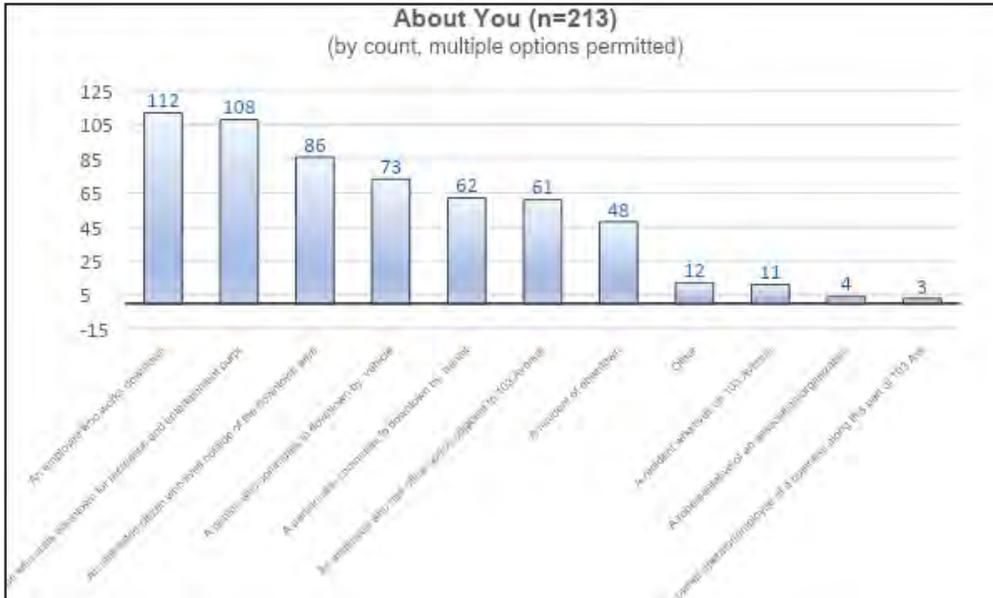
An online public survey provided the opportunity for Edmontonians to contribute feedback on the City of Edmonton 103 Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan. The survey was available from August 11 to August 24, 2020. A total of 213 respondents completed the survey, with 187 accessing it through the link on the project website (edmonton.ca/103avenue) and 26 accessing it via Edmonton.ca/Surveys.

There were five survey questions, including:

- + One multiple-choice question asking about the respondents' interest in/ association with 103 Avenue,
- + Three 5-point scale questions about plan features, using standard options of strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree, and
- + One open-ended question inviting general comments.

QUESTION ONE: ABOUT YOU

Respondents were asked to provide context for their interest in the Concept Plan, selecting one or more of 11 options. As illustrated in Figure One, more than half of respondents (112) identified as one of their options that they were an employee who works downtown (53 per cent), while 108 (51 per cent) also identified themselves as a person who visits downtown for recreation and entertainment. Eight-six (40 per cent) identified themselves as an interested citizen living outside downtown, while 73 (34 per cent) indicated they commute downtown by vehicle. Less frequent selections included those who commute downtown by transit (62), and employees with office space adjacent to 103 Avenue (61), both selected by 29 per cent of respondents. Just 48 (23 per cent) indicated they were a resident of downtown, with 11 (Five per cent) indicating they were a resident on 103 Avenue. Four (Two per cent) identified as an association/ organization representative, and three (One per cent) as an owner/operator or employee of a business along this leg of 103 Avenue. Examples of the 12 who also selected the Other option (Six per cent) included those with mobility issues, the elderly, those visiting the elderly, former downtown employees, and cyclists.



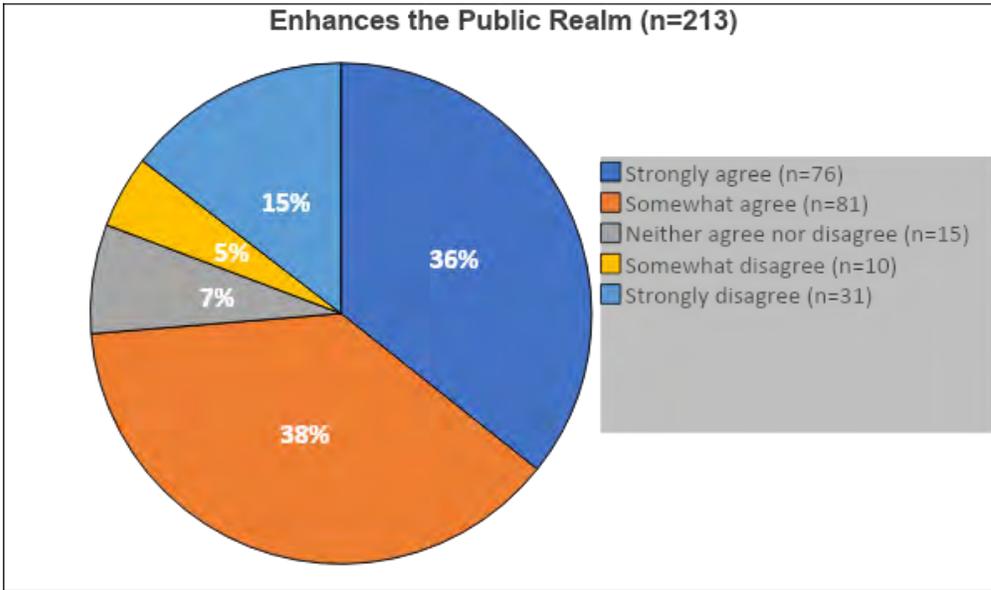
Features of the Plan – Green and Walkable Connections

Survey respondents were provided with the following preamble to the three questions about the Concept Plan's features:

The 103 Avenue Streetscape is intended as a Green and Walkable project. This means making the area more attractive to live and invest in, bringing more vibrancy and energy to downtown Edmonton. It is also intended to support safe and comfortable pedestrian movement, quality urban design, and more trees and greenery. 103 Avenue also connects hundreds of Edmontonians, including seniors, to their homes.

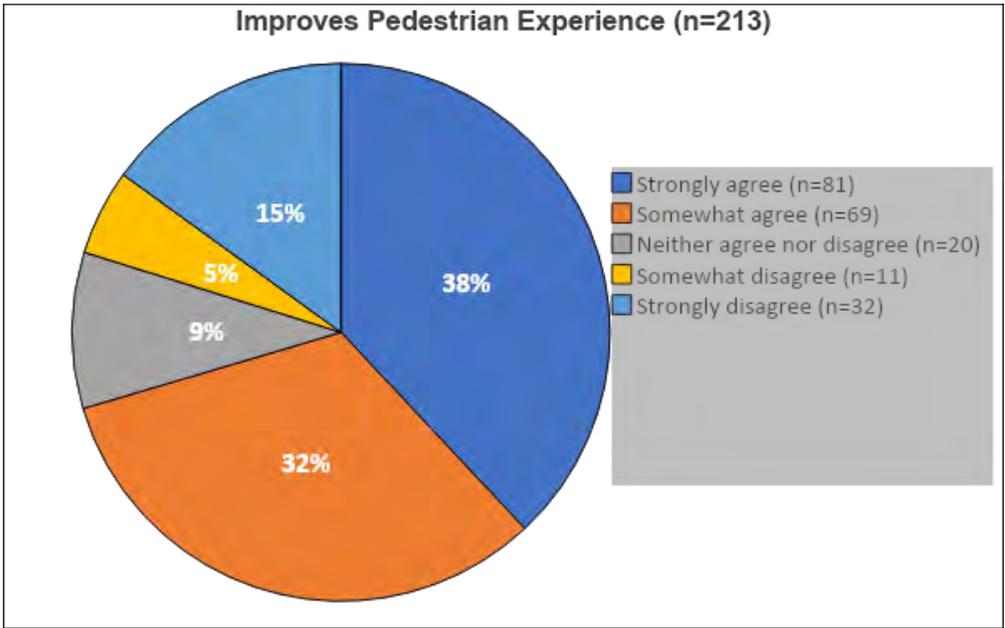
QUESTION TWO: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE THAT THIS PROJECT ACHIEVES THE VISION OF ENHANCING THE PUBLIC REALM (TREES, SEATING, AND LIGHTING) AND IMPROVING THE EXISTING CONNECTIONS?

A majority of almost three-quarters of respondents agreed that the plan's features enhance the public realm (see figure below), with 36 per cent strongly agreeing and 38 per cent somewhat agreeing. About one-fifth disagreed, with 14 per cent strongly disagreeing and five per cent somewhat disagreeing. Seven per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.



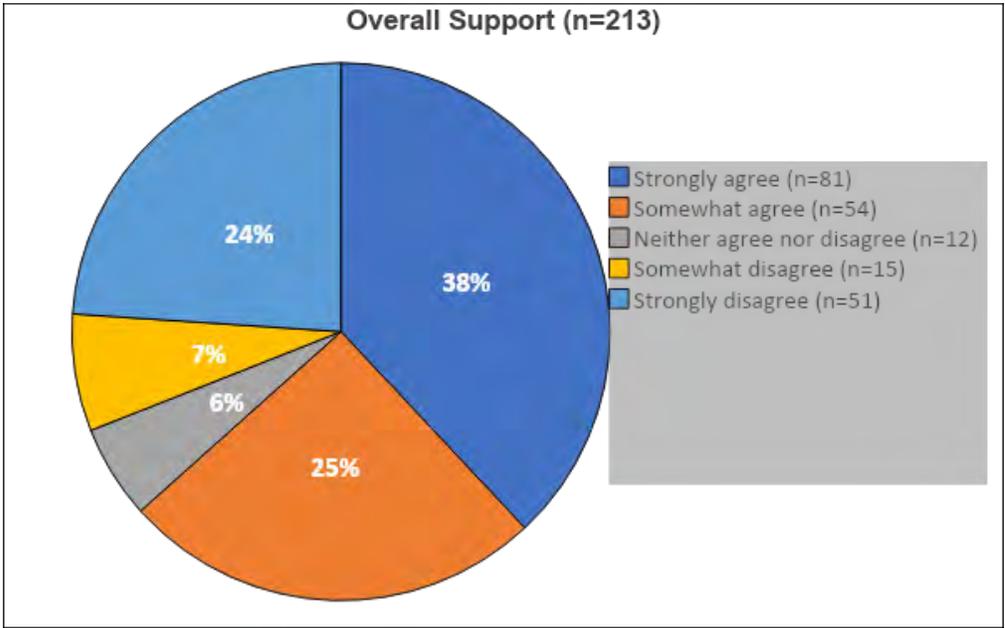
QUESTION THREE: TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE THAT THE CONCEPT PLAN IMPROVES THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE?

Results to this question followed a pattern very similar to Question two relating to enhancing the public realm. As illustrated in the figure on the following page, just less than three-quarters agreed that the plan features improve the pedestrian experience, with 38 per cent strongly agreeing and 33 per cent somewhat agreeing. One-fifth disagreed with the plan's features, with 15 per cent strongly disagreeing and five per cent somewhat disagreeing. Nine per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.



QUESTION FOUR: OVERALL SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION REGARDING THE CONCEPT PLAN FOR 103 AVENUE

A majority of about two-thirds of respondents agreed that they support the Concept Plan overall (see figure below), a result just slightly lower than support for specific features described in Questions two and three, with 38 per cent strongly agreeing and 25 per cent somewhat agreeing that they support the plan overall. About one-quarter (24 per cent) of respondents strongly disagreed (opposed) the plan overall, a result slightly higher than those who strongly disagreed on specific plan features reported in Questions two and three. Seven per cent somewhat disagreed and six per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.



QUESTION FIVE: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE CONCEPT PLAN

Respondents provided 132 comments in the open-ended question, summarized below by theme. Themes are presented in order of prevalence. Numerous observations and specific design suggestions to improve the current proposal were provided by respondents. These are summarized within the theme analysis, and a list of specific design suggestions is provided at the end of this section.

Overall, respondent comments reflected a range of viewpoints, from full support to full opposition. The most frequently mentioned idea across all comments indicated opposition to the project due to its cost. Some comments indicated complete support, or support in principle as long as specific design elements are adjusted/added to meet the broader intent of achieving green and walkable connections. Others suggested the proposed plan may be overly ambitious or impractical, and that taking a more tempered approach would achieve similar outcomes.



"With the budgetary issues from COVID, even the development of such a conceptual plan should not be prioritized in any way."

"A waste of taxpayer dollars."

"I love it!"

"Love the idea...something simpler but more functional would be better".

"Not all avenues or streets need to be incredible. This is not a place people want to be, regardless of dollars. Make it safe, well-lit and inviting... do not over-plan this area, let it act as a functional place".

"I walk this section daily for coffee and lunch breaks. It would be a welcome addition."

"While I appreciate the broad goal of greying the distinction between pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular traffic... with respect to carbon emissions and resource requirements... it may be less costly and less carbon- and resource-intensive to install and maintain painted lines, planters and seating with small trees or shrubs, rather than 'pouring fresh concrete', and keeping monocultured grasses and trees alive downtown".



Use of Tax Dollars

Many comments related to spending available tax dollars on this project, with about half of these comments indicating that the project is not an appropriate use of tax dollars, and about half indicating that the current period of fiscal restraint and the COVID-19 pandemic should preclude a project of this type being a spending priority at this time. In the latter case, suggestions for priority spending included dealing with homelessness and crime (especially in the immediate area), providing general road maintenance across the city as a whole, and undertaking police reform.

Concerns were also expressed about the City of Edmonton not having sufficient long-term funds in place to maintain the project area once the initial work is completed, thereby worsening the current state, and reducing the value and intended impact of the project. Other comments related to keeping the plan feasible by making it simpler and, therefore, less costly. For example, fewer benches and more tree planters, with a central art piece, may achieve project goals. A few comments indicated that the project will benefit a relatively few Edmontonians and so does not merit the expenditure drawn from taxpayers across the city.

Social Concerns in the Area

Whether supportive or opposed to the project, many comments indicated that without first addressing the broader challenges of seniors' services, homelessness, substance abuse, loitering and crime in the downtown generally, the merit of the project would be lost. Further, if the project proceeds, these issues must be fully addressed specifically within the project design. The concern is that the proposed improvements at the project site will exacerbate current issues, in turn leading to lack of public interest and support. In particular, there appears to be "no night-time concept" and there should be "some monitoring of this development to provide appropriate assistance to those spending the night in this location".

Modes of Transportation and Connectivity

Many comments addressed preferences for accessibility by a range of modes of transportation and connectivity. The most common concern related to the importance of maintaining existing vehicle parking (i.e. the parkade and angled parking) and continuing to consider vehicle commuters who need practical access to workplaces, businesses, and services. The plan has “too many parking spaces being removed”, including for those who live and work in nearby buildings. Current traffic congestion, safety in the parkade and parking lots, and the high cost of hard-to-find parking spots were also mentioned as reasons to maintain the parkade and angled parking. Adjustments are needed to crossings, lane design, and traffic lights to maintain flow and, in particular, “vehicle access needs to be maintained both ways, especially during the winter”.

The parking and congestion challenges can be summarized by the experience of one respondent:



There are several multi-story parking lots that are accessible by the road. Today, it can take me five to ten minutes during afternoon rush hour to just exit the lot. Then, five to ten minutes just to turn off of 103 Avenue. The intersections at 100 and 101 Streets are pinch points.

- 1. Unregulated pedestrians crossing north/south at the ends of the block result in backed-up traffic, then if clear of pedestrians, vehicles cannot turn onto 100 and 101 Streets due to vehicle volume on them.*
- 2. The bus stop on 101 Street and 104 Avenue blocks the right turn from 103 Avenue.*
- 3. A red light at 101 Street and 104 Avenue results in backed-up traffic and you cannot turn from 103 Avenue.*
- 4. The pedestrian crossing (with flashing lights) on 100 Street is heavily used and results in traffic being unable to turn onto 101 Street.*

How is this plan accommodating these issues? Will there be traffic lights installed at each end of the block to facilitate and control pedestrian and vehicle traffic flow?



A few comments stated that too much space has been provided for cars, including parking lots and the parkade, and that two-way cycling traffic needs to be allowed along the whole corridor. Related comments referenced the need to balance vehicular traffic with other modes of mobility, including eliminating vehicular traffic altogether in light of space constraints and safety: *"I would love some downtown blocks vehicle-free"*. Respondents expressed uncertainty and frustration about having the street shared with bikes and cars due to the street being relatively small with limited parking, or, more definitively: *"An option to fix this would be to close the street to cars, so there are no issues with both cars and pedestrians being in the small space"*.

A few comments reinforced the importance of including non-vehicular routing, which appears to not be included in the current proposed plan. For example, *"there should be dedicated bike lanes for bikes and e-scooters... both being green forms of transportation used by pedestrians"*.

A few comments indicated that the plan must ensure connectivity between this area and other prime locations in adjacent areas, such as City Hall and the Ice District, especially for cyclists. This will involve linking up what was viewed to be "disconnected" City of Edmonton street projects by connecting them all as a walkable route to other sites and amenities.

Weather and Safety

Many comments reflected the reality of just how windy this corridor is, at any time of year, but particularly in winter. Respondents liked the idea of the wind screens and shrubbery, with suggestions emphasizing that the wind screens are both necessary and need to deal with both west and north winds. Wind screens need to be large enough and strong enough to reliably deal with the issue. With Edmonton being a winter city, some comments indicated respondents welcomed the idea of better and brighter lighting

year-round, noting the project “has to work winter and night”, for example, by using more trees, benches, and lighting.

Some comments expressed the need to maintain clear and close access to and from seniors' residences to ensure safety for seniors, their visitors, and other mobility-impaired or frail citizens. The project must, accordingly, include parking and stopping spaces for ambulance, taxis, the DATS and Revera Residence buses, and meal delivery vehicles, as close to the building front door as possible. Using a continuous paving style with no curbs would allow these Edmontonians to more easily make their way across the street to the proposed seating areas (similar to the style further down this street): “On 96 Street, the paving stones on the road really make me feel comfortable walking on the road or crossing...if that is the intent here, paving stones should be included on the road”. Again, careful consideration should also be given to configuration of any shared use pedestrian/bike/scooter path, since these can be disconcerting and dangerous to pedestrians with impaired sight or hearing.

List of Specific Ideas Provided by Respondents

- + A scramble crosswalk would further enhance the connection making the whole thing a greenway.
- + Use sidewalk pavers consistent with 101 Street, 102 Avenue, etc.
- + Add more coniferous trees (as wind screens).
- + Add more soft surfaces that don't need to be watered, as well as areas that can be programmed for public events.
- + Balance hardscapes with natural elements, rather than “grey bricks”.
- + Consider closing the street, even for just day hours.
- + Consider raised crosswalks at the entrances to 103 Avenue from 101 Street and 100 Street to slow down vehicles entering 103 Avenue.
- + Cyclist crossings to Edmonton Tower/ Rogers Place are needed.
- + Include a little roof to help protect against the rain.
- + Include more diverse seating, such as picnic tables... would be better, so that people can use this space for get-togethers, eating, etc.
- + Keep roadway and loading areas to absolute minimum.
- + More street trees, double row on north side at least.

- + Move the amenity areas to the north side of the street and the traffic to the south so the businesses (active edge) have the amenity areas in front, and it will be in the sun. The plan currently shows the seating areas in the shade of the south podium, which would dramatically reduce use in the fall and spring.
- + Need better crossing points on the road (current crossing has no lights and people don't always stop).
- + Needs to be resistant to vandalism; wind screens shown will be destroyed and grassy areas will turn into a dead and dirty eyesore in a season or two. Hard surfaces with lots of shrubbery that won't be trampled would be great.
- + Put a park on the southeast corner to connect to the 103 Avenue project.
- + Put in speed bumps to slow down vehicular traffic.
- + Provide more opportunities for active recreation at a small scale (dog park, basketball, recreation equipment).
- + Redesign the light control out of the parking from 103 Avenue.
- + The street is very windy at all times of year so low-growing shrubs and flowers might do best there.
- + There should be a couple of vehicle pick-up and drop-off spots in front of the Churchill Apartments.
- + Use art on panels with internal light for the wind blocks to make them more appealing than currently shown.

AS A RESULT, WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE PROJECT?

- + Added more greenery and landscaping.
- + Carried the lighting theme and type of light standards used in the laneway west of 101 Street onto 103 Avenue east to 100 Street.
- + Provided enhanced crosswalks of 100 Street and 101 Street.
- + Changed the paving pattern on the roadway to be consistent with the pattern used on other downtown streets.
- + Made revisions to the seating to create more conversation areas.
- + Designated loading spaces in front of all buildings with a space for tour buses on the north side of 103 Avenue near 101 Street.
- + Commissioned an artist to provide input for the windscreens.

What's Next?

The next step in the 103 Avenue Streetscape project is to integrate the input from stakeholders and the public into the Preliminary Design. There will be ongoing meetings with stakeholders with whom the City needs to collaborate on specific design issues.

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

- + Participating in upcoming stakeholder meetings and public discussions in winter 2020.
- + Visiting the project website for news and regular updates
edmonton.ca/103Avenue

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

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



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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