

101 Avenue East Entrance Traffic Redirection Test: What We Heard & Observed

edmonton.ca/101AvenueCorridorStudy

| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY

Edmonton

Introduction

101 Avenue has the potential to become a destination that welcomes people with places to gather near vibrant commercial and residential development, supported with better sidewalks, bike paths, trees and greenery.

In the fall of 2019, the City of Edmonton tested a month long traffic closure and redirection at 101 Avenue near 50 Street. **The 101 Avenue East Entrance Traffic Redirection Test: What We Heard and Observed Report** provides a summary of the test, its background, what was heard from the public and what was observed from the analysis of traffic. The report also describes how this information will be used in the next phase of the 101 Avenue project.

Overall, the feedback and counts show that **the closure would be possible if improvements**, as identified in the *Study* and that help mitigate concerns heard through the feedback, are also made. For the **latest updates and next steps** on the 101 Avenue project **visit edmonton.ca/101AvenueCorridorStudy**.

Background

The *101 Avenue Corridor Study* established a vision for the future of 101 Avenue, from 50 Street to 79 Street, identifying options for land use changes, street design and community programming, and recommending specific actions to realize the area's potential. The *Study* involved a lot of engagement with residents, community leagues and businesses who recognized 101 Avenue's potential. The *101 Avenue Corridor Study* was presented to Council's Urban Planning Committee in June of 2018.

To help advance the implementation of the *101 Avenue Corridor Study*, improvements to the pedestrian environment such as new signage, repainted crosswalks, the addition of curb extensions and a new bus shelter were installed in 2019. As part of this implementation, the redirection test was conducted to further explore what was heard from the public during the *101 Avenue Corridor Study* engagement process (from 2016 to 2018).

The vision for 101 Avenue considers all modes of transportation including walking, cycling, transit, and motor vehicles. It includes redesigning 101 Avenue as a complete street meaning people of all ages and abilities will feel safe walking, cycling, and taking transit. The Study recommends transforming 101 Avenue into a mostly 3-lane road (one lane each direction with a centre turning lane) ensuring the corridor functions as both a destination and a connection (4.4. *Mobility - 101 Avenue Corridor Study*).

During that engagement process, we heard that vehicle traffic, including large trucks, use 101 Avenue as a shortcut instead of Terrace Road. As a result, the *Study* considered removing the direct connection of 101 Avenue westbound from 50 Street. This would

redirect trucks to use Terrace Road/98 Avenue, would allow 101 Avenue to be redesigned to improve safety, pedestrian movement and support existing businesses and future redevelopment.

The redirection test provided the opportunity to inform whether the closure and change should become permanent when 101 Avenue is renewed and reconstructed.

What We Did

The redirection test occurred for one month from September 23 to October 21, 2019. The access to 101 Avenue just west of 50 Street was temporarily closed and cars travelling west on 101 Avenue from 50 Street were directed to take Terrace Road. Vehicles were still able to access 101 Avenue from 57 Street or 71 Street. Temporary signage was placed prior to the closure to inform drivers and advise trucks to access 101 Avenue via 75 Street.

Figure 1: Poster shared to communicate awareness



It is important to note that the *Study* proposed improvements at the 57 Street/Terrace Road intersection for pedestrians and westbound right turning cars as part of the east entrance closure recommendation. These changes could not be included as part of the test, however, due to cost and complexity.

Communication and Awareness

Informing residents, businesses, the community leagues and commuters of all travel modes was a focus before and during the redirection. It was important to provide as much awareness as possible. Highlights of key dates and activities were:

Fall 2018: City staff engaged the community on possible actions such as improving signage, crosswalks, curb extensions, bus shelters and testing the closure at 101 Avenue east entrance.

November 2018: Actions, including the redirection test, were presented to City Council's Urban Planning Committee:

- Funding confirmed in March 2019
- New signage added, crosswalks repainted, curb extensions added and a new bus shelter installed Summer 2019

Augusts 2019: City staff met with representatives from Forest and Terrace Heights, Fulton Place and Gold Bar community leagues and the Great Hardisty Sustainability Coalition to share info about the test.

September 2019:

- Poster (web link and hardcopy) provided to community leagues to circulate
 - info included start/end date and how to provide input
- City staff delivered posters and spoke with businesses along 101 Avenue (between 71 Street and 75 Street)
- Posters delivered to homes on 101 Avenue, 101A Avenue (between 62 Street and 50 Street) and 50 Street (from 101 Avenue to 106 Avenue)
- City staff attended *Community Fun Day* hosted by Capilano, Forest Terrace Heights, Fulton Place and Gold Bar communities to provide info
- Redirection/closure info included in the *Southeast Voice* newsletter
- 101 Avenue project website updated, information shared via Twitter and a Public Service Announcement; city staff responded to inquiries from the media

Engagement

A key outcome of the redirection was to gather insight from those impacted. This information would build on what had been collected during the *Study's* public engagement process and complement the data collected from the traffic analysis. Redirection test engagement included:

- Drop in engagement at Capilano Library (October 10, 2019)
- Survey (online and hardcopy; available during and after the test)

- Emails or phone calls collected from 311 or the project email

Traffic Analysis

Traffic counts were completed before and during the test. This analysis provided a baseline (counts taken before the test) to compare with what if any change occurred during the test (counts taken during the test).

What We Heard

It was very beneficial to hear the feedback and questions from many people during the test. At the drop in engagement sessions and through the survey, people were asked if they noticed the change, if and how it impacted them and what needed to be considered if the closure was made permanent. All information was anonymous and aggregated together.

Table 1: Summary of participation

Number of people at the Drop In event	40 people attended the Drop in engagement
Number of survey respondents	159 people completed the survey
Survey respondents representation	<p>Live, work and/or commute* (* people were able to select more than one)</p> <p>62% - Reside in the 101 Avenue or adjacent area 54% - Commute or travel along 101 Avenue 4% - Work at, operate or own a business and/or service located on 101 Avenue</p> <p>Neighbourhood Representation</p> <p>34% - Fulton Place 27% - Terrace Heights 17% - Forest Heights 10% - Gold Bar 6% - Capilano 4% - Ottewell 2% - Holyrood</p>
Percentage of respondents that noticed the	79% - Yes 19% - Not sure

redirection	2% - No
--------------------	----------------

The first question people were asked was if they noticed the temporary change on 101 Avenue near 50 Street, directing vehicles to use Terrace Road instead of 101 Avenue. This was a way to gauge if people had seen and/or experienced the redirection/closure.

If and how people were impacted

Next, people were asked if and how they may have been impacted, both positively or negatively. This would provide information on what was working and what may need to be addressed.

For those who shared that the impact was **positive**, the most common themes were (brackets include approximate number of mentions, followed by common words):

- **Experience/feelings/perceptions** (43) - Enjoyable; nicer; quieter; less stress; less confusing
- **Easier to cross 101 Avenue** (13) - walking, by bike or for kids
- **Traffic** (12) - lighter; less trucks; easy to get around; better flow
- **Safer** (8)
- **Inconvenienced but not bothered** (4) - slowed down a bit; barely noticed; traffic flowed the same

For those who shared that the impact was **negative**, the most common themes were (brackets include approximate number of mentions, followed by common words):

- **Traffic** (32) - increased; caused congestion; increase in commute/time; flow impeded, slower
- **57 Street/Terrace Road** (28) - sharp, tight turn; need to fix corner, crosswalk; slows, restricts, backs up traffic; safety concerns
- **Shifted traffic** (16) - to service road; from arterial to residential; past schools
- **Experience/feelings/perceptions** (15) - penalized, challenging, disruptive, annoying, frustrated, inconvenienced, confusing
- **Impacts to businesses** (7) - for businesses, customers
- **Impacts safety** (4)

Considerations if the closure was made permanent

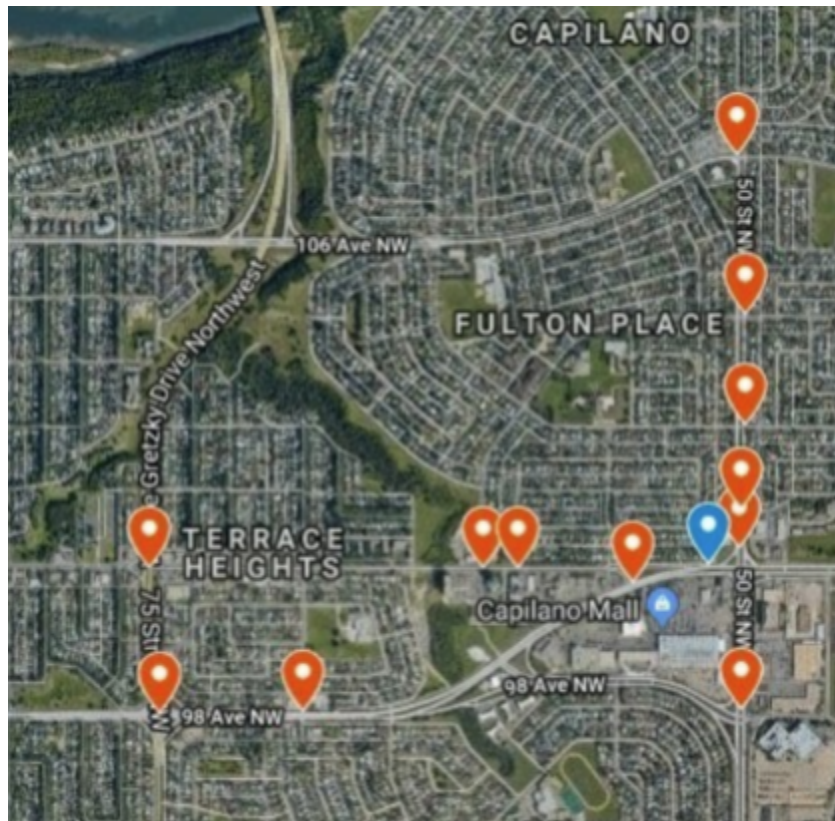
The final question asked people to share what they would suggest if the closure were made permanent. The most common themes or topics shared were (brackets include approximate number of mentions, followed by common words used):

- **Improve intersection and right turn at 57 Street/Terrace Road** (24)
- **Consider traffic** (24) - increase; congestion; impact to other routes
- **Close the service road's eastern access** (12)
- **Consider businesses** (10)
- **Other** (9) - more signs; radar; speed bumps; redirect trucks
- **Improvements for pedestrians and cyclists** (9)
- **Improvements for drivers** (5)

What We Observed

Thirteen locations, including the location of the closure, were identified to understand what if any significant change to traffic volumes occurred.

Figure 2: Locations where traffic was counted before and during the test



Traffic counts were taken on Thursday, September 5, 2019 (before the redirection) and again on Tuesday, October 8th (during the redirection). Taking the counts a couple of weeks after the redirection/closure was installed allowed traffic to normalize to the change. At each of the locations counts recorded the following:

- The number of cars

- The direction cars were travelling (northbound, eastbound, westbound and southbound) and
- Their movement (did cars turn right, turn left or go through the intersection)

While counts were taken over a 24 hour period, comparisons focused on the peak points of the day—the morning and afternoon rush hour periods. For example, before counts taken from the morning rush hour were compared with during counts from the morning rush hour; same for the afternoon.

The intention was to understand what, if any, significant change in volumes occurred at the location of the redirection/closure, at major intersections and through the neighborhoods.

General Observations:

- No significant changes in traffic volumes at major intersections
 - e.g. 75 Street and 98 Avenue; 50 Street and 106 Avenue; 50 Street and 101 Avenue
 - Traffic adjusted; alternate roads chosen without impact
- No significant increase in traffic volumes into the neighbourhood
 - e.g. into the Fulton Place neighbourhood
 - Traffic volumes generally low overall

Differences on 101 Avenue vs Terrace Road

- There was a decrease in westbound traffic volumes along 101 Avenue and an increase in westbound traffic along Terrace Road
 - This represents the anticipated shift from 101 Avenue to Terrace Road
 - However, the increase on Terrace Road was small relative to the existing number of cars
 - The charts below show the traffic counts for both 101 Avenue and Terrace Road

Figure 3: Traffic on 101 Avenue before and during the test

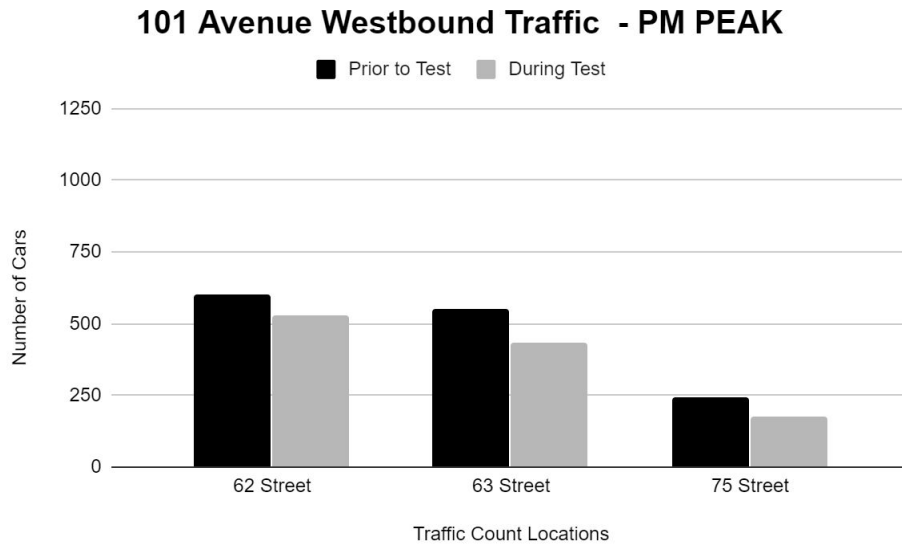
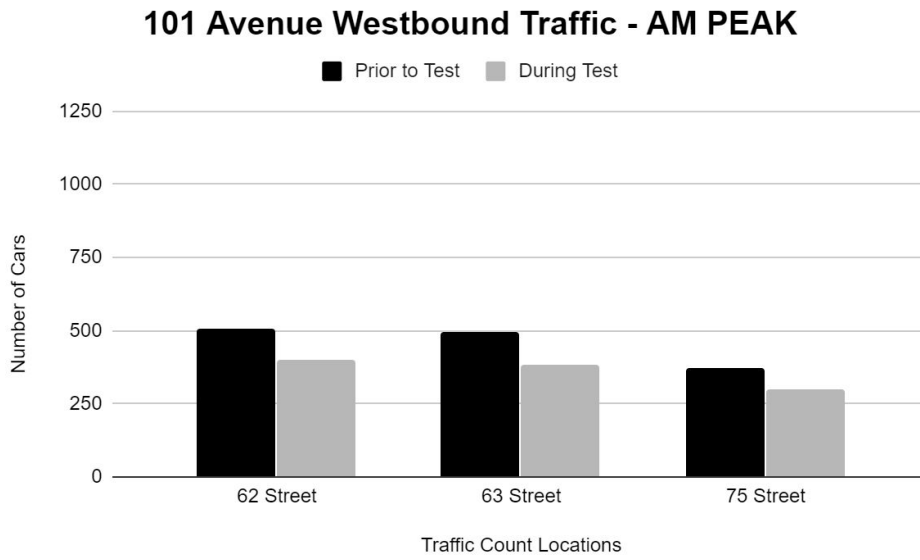
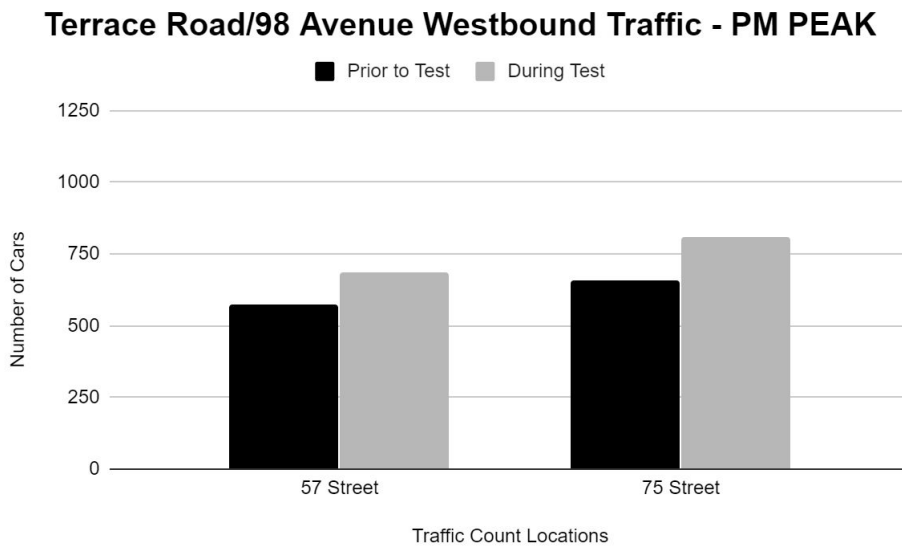
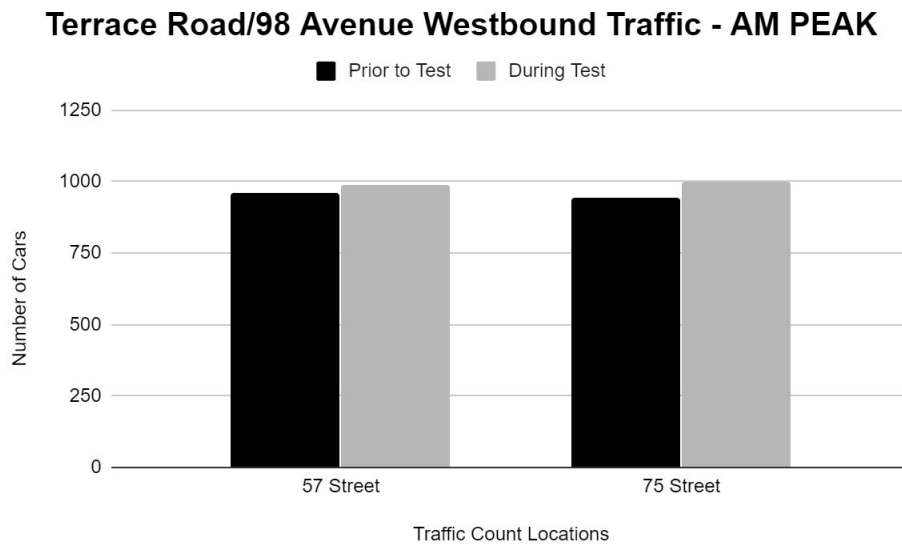


Figure 4: Traffic on Terrace Road/98 Avenue before and during the test



Terrace Road and 57 Street

The number of cars travelling westbound that turned right onto 57 Street increased during the test. For example, there were no cars that turned right in the morning or afternoon rush hours before the test. During the test there were approximately 200 more cars that turned right (both in the morning and afternoon). These increases represent the cars that would have travelled straight on 101 Avenue but needed to use 57 Street because of the redirection/closure. It also represents people whose destination was their neighbourhood or a 101 Avenue business (as the total number of cars decreased further west on 101 Avenue, as seen in the charts above).

Service Road adjacent to 101 Avenue

There was also an increase in cars that turned right onto the Service Road using its eastern access. For example, there were:

- 79 more cars that turned onto the Service Road in the AM peak
- 59 more cars that turned onto the Service Road in the PM peak

The increases represent cars that, as a result of the redirection/closure, chose the Service Road instead of Terrace Road or turning right at 57 Street to continue west. However, the Service Road is intended for local traffic. These increases echo concerns heard during the test. The placement of temporary barricades were added to prevent shortcutting (through the Service Road) following the traffic count in the interest of safety for the remainder of the test.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The combination of what we heard through the public engagement and observed through the traffic counts provides valuable information for the next phase of the 101 Avenue project. Overall, the feedback and counts show that **the closure of the east entrance would be possible if improvements**, as identified in the *Study* and that help mitigate concerns heard through the feedback, are also made. As the closure is considered in the next phases of the 101 Avenue project, additional engagement will occur.

It was helpful to hear that people felt it was **easier and safer to cross** 101 Avenue as a pedestrian or as a cyclist and that for some drivers that were slowed they were not inconvenienced.

While respondents shared that they felt the redirection/closure caused traffic to increase, the traffic counts showed that **there were no significant changes** at intersections or through the neighborhood but there were small increases on **Terrace Road** as anticipated while traffic decreased on **101 Avenue**.

The feedback about the intersection of Terrace Road and 57 Street as well as the Service Road reflect what was observed in the traffic counts. This is helpful information for the

project's next phase. For the **Terrace Road and 57 Street** intersection it will mean **exploring options** such as maintaining three through lanes on Terrace Road westbound (between 50 Street and 57 Street), adjustments to the turning radius, and possible adjustments to the crosswalks and intersection overall to improve safety. These options would align with the *101 Avenue Corridor Study*. These adjustments would enable people to continue travelling to 101 Avenue, access those businesses and address the feedback that people felt disrupted or inconvenienced.

For the **Service Road** adjacent to 101 Avenue, it will mean **exploring whether the eastern access** (to the Service Road) can be closed or modified including adjustments to the 101 Avenue service road for emergency services access. Residents would still have direct access to the Service Road from the west. While the *101 Avenue Corridor Study* has the eastern access open, this modification may be needed to address the feedback and ensure safety for residents on the Service Road.

The options to improve Terrace Road and 57 Street as well as the Service Road are examples of what will be refined and presented to the public and community for **further engagement** in the next phase of the 101 Avenue Project.

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone that shared their feedback and for the continued community involvement. For the **latest updates and next steps** on the 101 Avenue project **visit edmonton.ca/101AvenueCorridorStudy**.