

WHAT WE HEARD

Imagine Jasper Avenue Phase 1 – Visioning

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The City of Edmonton is planning to reconstruct Jasper Avenue from 109 Street to 124 Street. In advance of this work, a streetscape concept plan is being developed to identify elements that can be included with construction, scheduled to begin in 2018.

A public engagement plan has been developed to involve area residents, commuters, community leagues, local businesses and City stakeholders in designing this streetscape concept plan.

In November 2015, engagement kicked-off with workshops and online surveys to help define the vision that will guide the next stages of the project. The workshops were hosted in the Oliver Community at Christ Church, and the surveys were hosted on the project web site and distributed through the Edmonton Insight Community. Over 2,100 people participated in this phase of the consultation.

Community League meetings, flyers, road signs, e-newsletters, newspaper ads, online surveys, social media, phone calls and emails were used to reach citizens city-wide and invite participation.

<p>Phase 1 Participation</p> <p>Edmonton Insight Community: 1,695 Visioning Workshops: 120 Online Survey: 317 Total: 2,132</p>

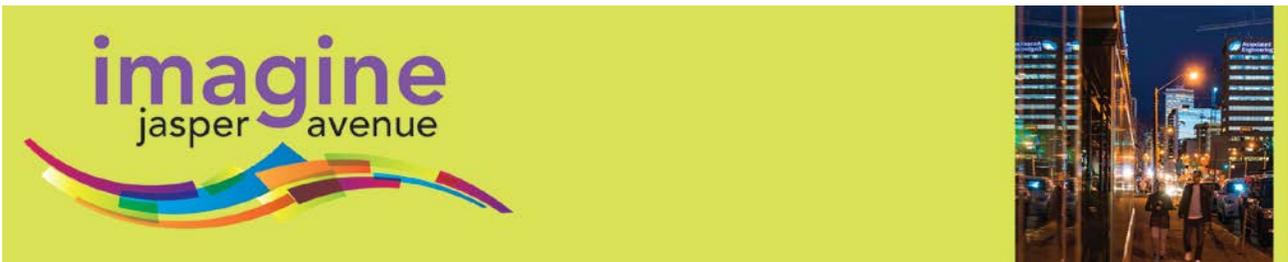
OVERALL THEMES

To establish a vision to guide this project, participants were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses they currently see on the avenue, and to imagine potential threats and opportunities that may arise in the future.



Some of the overarching themes include:

- There is great pride in and connection with the community. Participants spoke of the history and character of the area; its proximity to the River Valley; the number of great destinations, services and shops; and a strong feeling of belonging to a very diverse community.
- They also identified the need to improve connectivity to these key destinations. Making the corridor more pedestrian-friendly is key, which includes repairing and widening sidewalks, creating resting spots and gathering areas, and making it easier to cross the roadway.



- There was praise for the new pedestrian crossing lights. Respondents felt that more lights, with more crossing time, would make people feel safer crossing Jasper Avenue.
- Many said the area was visually unappealing and lacking in landscaping like trees and other greenery. Making the area more pedestrian-friendly also means making it a more comfortable and inviting place to be.
- In the bigger picture, many described the type of businesses and development in the area as very car-focused.
- The need for infrastructure and cyclist connectivity to major bike routes on the Victoria Promenade and the future 102 Avenue bike route was identified.
- While there is a desire to shift the focus more to pedestrians than vehicles, there is also a recognition that the avenue needs to work for all types of users. Finding the right balance between these interests will be key.
- To make this project a success, it's important to build trust and demonstrate how input has been reflected in the design.
- While Jasper Avenue is part of a great local community, it is also a key route for a large commuter-based population. There is a concern that the needs and desires of the local community may be lost if there is a large commuter-based population with conflicting interests.

VISION & PRINCIPLES

Guided by input from the community, an overall vision and guiding principles for the Imagine Jasper Avenue project were developed.

The project team will confirm this vision through the second phase of engagement, and begin the conversation about how to make it a reality through the streetscape concept plan.

Vision:

Jasper Avenue is Edmonton’s premier Main Street—a people place.

Guiding Principles:

Create a vibrant, all seasons destination
a safe place of gathering for all ages and abilities

Shape a community street
Celebrate the history and diversity of its people

Put pedestrians first,
ensuring travel options for all users

Increase the green
Enhance and beautify with trees and plantings

Consider the big picture
Reinforce connections to local destinations and promote high quality development



STRENGTHS

Participants appreciate the proximity to the River Valley, key business areas like High Street and 124 Street, academic institutions, and the Alberta Legislature. They also enjoy the diversity of shops and services, and the number of smaller, local, and independent businesses in the community. Population density, diversity, existing public art and the history of the area are important contributors to the area's identity.

The existing transit service along the avenue was noted by many participants as a strength of Jasper Avenue. Additionally, the importance of this route for east/west travel into and out of downtown was highlighted.

New pedestrian crossing lights were recently installed in the area, and many feel they are a great safety improvement.

WEAKNESSES

The area was described as visually unappealing. Its grey look is characterized by noise, dirt, and a lack of trees and greenery.

It was also emphasized that Jasper Avenue is very vehicle-focused, with a lot of travel lanes and high travel speeds. The types of businesses along the roadway also tend to focus on cars.

Pedestrians find the sidewalks are narrow and in poor condition in some areas, making the avenue somewhat inaccessible to children, seniors, people with mobility limitations and families. Crossing the avenue can also be a challenge, as many feel the crossing signals are too short. While the area's proximity to the River Valley and Victoria Promenade is strength, some noted that the connections to these places need improvement.

Open spaces like parks, or squares and pedestrian amenities like benches are lacking. Facilities, amenities and connectivity for cyclists were also identified, with the potential to include a barrier or buffer to separate cyclists and pedestrians.

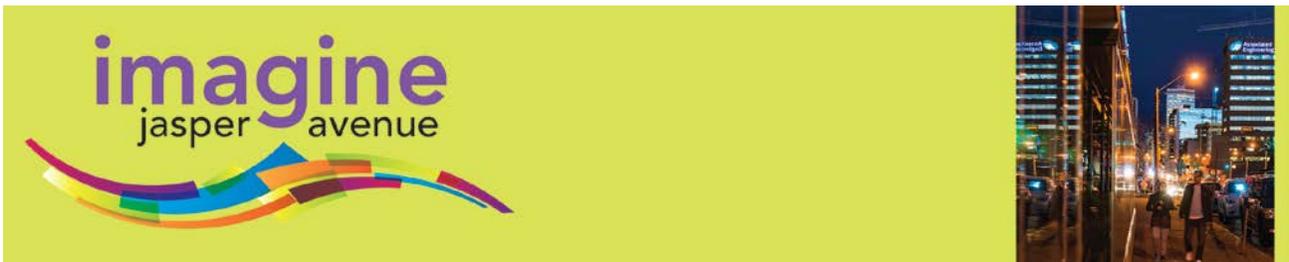
THREATS

A rigorous process that builds trust, demonstrates willingness to listen, and incorporates a new engagement approach is important for this project. There are concerns about managing the engagement process, creating unreal expectations, and lack of funding or political will to deliver the vision.

It is also recognized that Jasper Avenue is only part of a bigger picture. New developments in other parts of downtown will draw people away from Jasper Avenue and, at the same time, they may drive more commuter traffic to Jasper Avenue.

Buy-in and support from the development community is very important to achieving this vision. High-quality development that reflects the vision should be considered over "big box" developments.





OPPORTUNITIES

Space is an important theme. Because the roadway is wider, participants feel there is opportunity to reallocate how the space is used. Additional space is also needed to provide open spaces like parks and plazas, and to provide new pedestrian amenities.

Walkability is essential. At the same time, the need to continue to be able to travel in and through the area by bike, bus and car is also required. Citizens should have access to major cycling routes on 102 Avenue and the Victoria Promenade. Transit accessibility is also essential.

Participants want Jasper Avenue to have a well-designed, attractive public realm. Desires for the public realm included integrating landscaping or greenery, place-making features and public art or artistic streetscape elements. Designing for winter is key. It was suggested the streetscaping could be themed to recognize the history and identify of the avenue.

The streetscape project is an opportunity to improve accessibility and safety for families, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Improving lighting could add character and security to the area.

There is a desire for more and better connections with adjacent destinations such as the downtown core, River Valley and the Victoria Promenade. Enhancing transit service and providing more connections to the LRT were also suggested.

Connecting the existing streetcar to provide access to Whyte Avenue was identified, and it was noted that this could be an opportunity to design in a way that will encourage people to make more sustainable transportation choices. Providing charging stations could also encourage

electric cars. Promoting sustainability can also be incorporated through features like LED lighting or edible landscaping.

Development choices could influence the ability to achieve the project vision. Decisions that promote local businesses, require higher quality architecture and/or weather protection on buildings will increase walkability. Promoting development such as patios and cafes may help bring life to the street.

WHAT'S NEXT

Through a public event and online survey, we will confirm the vision created from this input and work together to start understanding factors that will impact future design options.

Later in 2016, options for the Jasper Avenue streetscape concept design will be explored and presented for feedback. Following this work, a draft concept will be created and brought back for further comment in fall 2016.

Once the Jasper Avenue Streetscape concept plan is finalized, it will undergo preliminary and detailed design before road reconstruction starts in 2018.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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