

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Newton Traffic Concerns

Edmonton

### Introduction

The City of Edmonton is building a great neighbourhood in Newton beginning in spring 2018. As the City is committed to involving Edmontonians in the decisions that affect them, residents have been asked to provide input, to identify missing sidewalk connections and opportunities for other investments to add to Newton's livability.

The City held its first meeting with the community league executive on October 4, 2016. A second neighbourhood-wide meeting was held March 14, 2017.

Newton residents had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the neighbourhood preliminary design, and learn about the local improvement process. Staff members from Building Great Neighbourhoods, Citizen Services, Sustainable Development, City Operations, and Forestry were on hand to address residents' questions.

The following provides a general overview of traffic-specific comments and questions from the meeting, received from emails and from the online comment form. Other neighbourhood-related comments and questions may be found in other documents located at [www.edmonton.ca/BuildingNewton](http://www.edmonton.ca/BuildingNewton).

### Input Received and City Responses

**Traffic lights at 123 Avenue and 50 Street:** Some community members asked about adding traffic lights/signals on 123 Avenue at 50 Street for eastbound traffic exiting the neighbourhood, with an emphasis on left turns to go north on 50 Street.

**City response:** After review, this intersection was found to warrant the installation of a new pedestrian-actuated traffic signal at 123 Avenue and 50 Street. Signals will stop traffic on 50 Street only when requested by pedestrians that have pushed the button. Many elements are considered when assessing locations to install traffic signals including pedestrian activity, vehicle volumes, roadway classification, vehicle speeds, sight line restrictions and the collision history. At this time, the intersection does not warrant an upgrade to a full traffic signal, but the City will continue to monitor the location. The pedestrian signal can be upgraded to a full traffic signal in the future if it is warranted. The new signals will be installed in 2019 during

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neighbourhood renewal construction in Newton.

**Safety concerns about 123 Avenue and 58 Street intersection:** Some community members identified concerns at this intersection related to speeding and westbound vehicles failing to yield, which some felt was creating unsafe conditions for other motorists, pedestrians, and nearby property owners.

**City response:** Though initially out of scope due to the good condition of the roadway and sidewalks, the City is taking this opportunity to consider improvements and address possible safety issues through methods such as signage changes or intersection realignment. Once the City's review is complete, any modifications will be posted on the project website and communicated to adjacent property owners.

**Traffic calming measures along 121 Avenue:** Some community members were concerned around the inclusion of speed tables, speed bumps and raised crosswalks along 121 Avenue, while some community members requested additional locations to be considered.

**City response:** The mid-block speed humps on 121 Avenue in Newton are being relocated to intersections, and are being replaced with raised crosswalks. These have a slightly different profile from speed tables and speed humps, typically wider and lower. Raised crosswalks enhance pedestrian safety by slowing vehicles, channeling pedestrians to cross at certain locations, and making pedestrians more visible. Raised crosswalks are being added at 56 Street, 55 Street and 52 Street, crossings to the Community League, the school, and Jacob Prins Park, respectively. Corresponding signage will be installed to alert drivers of the raised crosswalk locations. In addition, it is our usual practice to place a raised crosswalk or speed hump at the first intersection in the neighbourhood for drivers entering off the arterial roadway network - in this case, at 51 Street. This is a reminder to drivers that they are entering a residential neighbourhood, and there are different expectations on driver behaviour.

**Traffic calming in other areas of the neighbourhood:** Some community members expressed interest in a full Community Traffic Management program for

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the neighbourhood, with specific interest in traffic volumes and speeds on all of the avenues and on 58 Street, and suggested signage such as “Traffic Calmed Neighbourhood” and “Local Traffic Only” when entering the neighbourhood.

**City response:** A full Community Traffic Management process is not planned for the Newton neighbourhood at this time. The traffic surveys to date show that speeds and volumes are in the expected range for all roads in Newton. Although a full Community Traffic Management process was not completed, the existing speed humps on 121 Avenue are being re-built as raised crosswalks, both to maintain the current speeds and as enhanced pedestrian safety features. Traffic speeds (and perhaps volumes) are expected to change on the roadways adjacent to St. Leo Catholic School/Newton Community League and the Inclusive Learning Service Centre, as the 30 km/h school zone speed limit will be extended in 2018 to include 121 Avenue and 122 Avenue between 54 Street and 57 Street, and 54 Street and 57 Street between 121 Avenue and 122 Avenue. Speed awareness signs will also be placed this spring to enhance speed limit awareness for drivers on 122 Avenue and 123 Avenue west of 50 Street.

We do not install signage such as “Traffic Calmed Neighbourhood” and “Local Traffic Only” signs in the City of Edmonton anymore. These signs are being phased out and removed as we are made aware of their presence, and as opportunities arise.

**Lowering the neighbourhood speed limit to 40km/hr:** Some community members were interested in changing the speed limit to 40km/hr in residential areas.

**City response:** The City of Edmonton is working with the City of Calgary and the Province of Alberta in pursuing lower speed limits within residential neighbourhoods through the new City Charter. Public engagement is currently underway, and the report is due to City Council in spring 2018. Please check back to the [City of Edmonton Urban Planning Committee](#) schedule for exact timelines.

**Restrictions to traffic flow at 121 Avenue and 50 Street:** Some wanted to see changes in how traffic accesses Newton at 121 Avenue and 50 Street. A suggestion

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included restricting southbound traffic on 50 Street from turning right, and preventing westbound traffic on 121 Avenue from continuing through into Newton.

**City response:** Any changes to access and egress of a neighbourhood may be part of a Community Traffic Management review, to facilitate a neighbourhood-wide conversation. Restrictions and road closures are typically one of the most aggressive means to restrict traffic within a community, and doing so in an isolated manner can have unintended consequences on traffic and travel patterns on adjacent streets. As traffic surveys to date show that speeds and volumes are in the expected range for Newton, a full Community Traffic Management review will not be taken at this time.

**Traffic lights at 121 Avenue and 50 Street:** Some asked for adjustments to the traffic lights at this intersection. Suggestions included changing the existing full traffic signals to pedestrian-actuated signals for 50 Street with stop signs on 121 Avenue, or alternatively adjusting the signal timing to shorter phases for traffic entering and leaving Newton on 121 Avenue.

**City response:** The full traffic signals were installed to address the collision history at the intersection and cannot be removed. The signal timing has been reviewed based on previous feedback from the community, and is currently running at the minimum green time for east and westbound traffic. The signal timing for east and westbound traffic cannot be further reduced.

**Traffic signal adjustments at 118 Avenue and 50 Street:** Some asked for an advance left-turn phase at all times, with it being extended during morning and afternoon rush hours.

**City response:** Dedicating time during a traffic signal phase to a single traffic movement results in delay for the remaining users of the intersection and must be carefully considered. Left-turn phases are reviewed based on traffic demand and intersection capacity, with consideration of vehicle volumes, delays experienced by drivers, safety concerns such as turning behavior on amber, and intersection geometry. Since the addition of left-turn phases reduces the amount of green time available to other traffic movements, these phases are only used when demand is high enough, when sufficient intersection capacity is available to accommodate

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them, or when safety is identified to be a concern. Left-turn phases do benefit turning vehicles; however, the installation of unwarranted left-turn phases also reduces traffic signal timing efficiency and increases delay time for all users through an intersection. With this in mind, the operational performance of this intersection has been reviewed using the most recent traffic counts. Based on this assessment, this intersection does not meet the criteria of a left-turn phase during the morning and off-peak hours. The existing afternoon peak left-turn phase will be maintained.

**Winter maintenance on 121 Avenue:** Some suggested reduced snow clearing and removal on 121 Avenue to reduce traffic volumes along the road.

**City response:** The level of service that a roadway receives for snow and ice control is dependent on a number of factors, including the bus routes and bus ways on or adjacent to the roadway, traffic volumes, emergency access routes, and the location of schools. The use of snow is not an accepted traffic calming measure, and would contradict the City's Snow and Ice Control Policy, which requires that roadways be maintained to provide a safe and reliable transportation network while providing excellent customer/citizen service.

### Next Steps

Construction is set to begin in Newton in spring of 2018, continuing into 2019. For project updates and information, please refer to [www.edmonton.ca/BuildingNewton](http://www.edmonton.ca/BuildingNewton).