

101 Avenue Corridor Study – Update (B. Henderson)

Recommendation

That the June 5, 2018, Urban Planning Committee report CR_5703, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 20, 2018, Urban Planning Committee, Councillor B. Henderson made the following Inquiry:

That Administration provide a report on the current status of the 101 Avenue corridor study and the planned 101 Avenue arterial rebuild.

Executive Summary

This report describes the process to develop the Draft 101 Avenue Corridor Study, current project status, and potential next steps to implement actions identified in the Study.

The Study area encompasses 101 Avenue and the abutting properties between Terrace Road and 79 Street NW. Administration initiated the Study in 2016 as a pilot project to support ELEVATE. Development of the Study was a collaborative process between Administration, area property and business owners, and residents. The draft Study identifies a number of directions and actions to address current challenges and opportunities present in the corridor.

Although a Draft Corridor Study was completed in June 2017, it was not immediately advanced to allow Administration time to prioritize a city-wide network of nodes and corridors, which is a fundamental element of the new City Plan in defining Edmonton's future priority growth areas. Administration is currently reviewing how it should best invest limited discretionary operating and capital dollars to enable these priority growth areas. This includes reviewing the planning tools applied and the infrastructure installed within priority growth areas.

Since June 2017, Administration has reconsidered its approach to the Corridor Study. 101 Avenue is not a high ranking corridor relative to development pressures, or development potential. Rather it is currently a generally stable corridor. As such, it

does not require significant area-specific policy guidance to manage land use or social change, as might be applied through a statutory plan or a Study adopted by resolution for a high need or rapid growth area. However, like other similar corridors it could benefit from public realm improvements and mobility enhancements. To this end there are ongoing City programs, including neighbourhood renewal, arterial roadway rehabilitation and tree planting, that could address some of the challenges and opportunities identified by the Study. A schedule of pending and potential improvements could be captured through a staged implementation action plan rather than a formalized land use plan.

Report

Location and Character

101 Avenue is an arterial road corridor in east central Edmonton. Although it is an arterial road and part of a commuter route, the roadway has relatively low traffic volumes. Abutting development includes low density residential, and low, medium and high rise apartments, with small scale auto-oriented strip mall development, and low pedestrian activity.

Study Scope

The study boundaries include 101 Avenue from Terrace Road to 79 Street and the adjacent properties.

The scope of work for the Corridor Study included establishing a vision for the future of 101 Avenue, identifying options for land use changes, street design and community programming, and recommending specific actions to realize the area's potential. Recommended actions focused on applying existing land use and transportation tools, and civic programs to influence change.

Study Process

In 2016, Administration initiated the Corridor Study as a pilot project subsequent to community engagement sponsored under ELEVATE. To develop the 101 Avenue Corridor Study, a multi-disciplinary team conducted a planning process including:

- Information Gathering: May to June 2016
- Vision and Concept Development: July to December 2016
- Refine and Present Concept: January 2016 to July 2017

The community was very engaged throughout the process. A range of well attended events informed the content and direction of the 101 Avenue project. Attachment 1 contains a detailed summary of engagement activities and results.

The Corridor Study was posted in draft format on the project website in June 2017, and is provided as Attachment 2.

Status of Arterial Renewal

101 Avenue is currently assessed to be in fair (Grade “C”) condition and minor renewal work was planned for the portion of 101 Avenue between 50 Street and 75 Street in 2017. At the time, the Study was initiated in 2016 an opportunity was identified to leverage planned improvements to 101 Avenue to enhance the appearance of the corridor and thereby catalyze private investment, encourage more pedestrian/cyclist traffic and diminish the impact of traffic volumes along the corridor. To preserve this opportunity, the planned improvements were placed on hold pending completion of the Study and a potential recommendation that enhancements be included as part of the planned improvements to the corridor.

Minor rehabilitation of 101 Avenue could include pavement resurfacing and selective replacement of elements such as curbs and sidewalks, and streetlights. Timed optimally and under the right conditions, these minor improvements can extend the life of the infrastructure in the road right-of-way and delay full reconstruction by 15 to 20 years. Full reconstruction could include replacement of the road bed, road pavement, and the concrete curbs and sidewalks. This scenario provides an opportunity to undertake enhancements within the road right-of-way that go beyond like for like.

The City’s Complete Streets Guidelines provide direction to design a street in a manner that reflects its context, land use and users. An objective of complete streets is to integrate the activities of all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Among the hierarchy of streets are “Main Streets”, which are pedestrian priority streets and as such are eligible for enhanced treatment; optimally installed at the time they are reconstructed. These “Main Streets” are identified by the type of built forms fronting them, the land uses and activities associated with those built forms, and the traffic volumes along the street. 101 Avenue within the study area does not qualify as a “Main Street” and therefore is not eligible for increased budget and enhanced treatment.

Subject to additional assessment and preliminary design, Administration understands the current condition of 101 Avenue requires only minor rehabilitation to delay the need for full reconstruction. Due to the increased cost of full reconstruction and the competition for funding among other arterial road reconstruction projects, Administration recommends minor rehabilitation be undertaken during the 2019 to 2022 budget cycle.

If 101 Avenue were allowed to deteriorate to point of requiring full reconstruction, the earliest that reconstruction could advance would be during the 2023 to 2026 budget cycle with construction tentatively to commence between 2024 and 2027. Based on

not being a “Main Street”, reconstruction would be on the basis of like for like replacement with an opportunity for enhancements up to 10 percent of the project cost. Funding for these enhancements could be drawn from existing funding/profile sources including Complete Streets, or a stand alone profile for the corridor. Alternatively, the corridor could be designated as a “Main Street” and be eligible for enhancements beyond 10 percent of the project cost.

Currently, Administration is monitoring 101 Avenue to assess roadway condition and rehabilitation requirements. The scope, timeline and process to rehabilitate will be informed by:

- current condition of the infrastructure,
- relative priority among other arterial renewal needs, and
- availability of funding.

See Attachment 3 for detailed descriptions of the potential future timelines, process, and scenarios for arterial renewal of 101 Avenue.

Implementation

The adjacent communities desire that 101 Avenue become more than a travel corridor, and the Corridor Study identifies a number of actions and themes them into several streams: land use, built form, public realm, green infrastructure and mobility interventions. Since the Draft Corridor Study was completed in May 2017, a number of recommendations have already been achieved or are moving ahead, as listed in Attachment 4.

Current Planning Context

Area Redevelopment Plans and Land Use/Corridor Studies are land use planning tools to manage redevelopment pressures and potential in (typically) mature areas of the city. These plans and studies are structured to contain a set of locally-specific goals, principles, objectives, policies and actions to implement a vision for change that is co-created between Administration and the local community, in alignment with overall City and Council priorities. Actions to implement Plans and Studies include specific policy direction, changes in land use zoning, the application of initiatives and programs, and capital improvements.

Edmonton has over 30 active Area Redevelopment Plans and Land Use Studies that date back to the 1970s and that are as recent as the Stadium Station Area Redevelopment Plan adopted in 2018. Whereas land use guidelines (such as Transit Oriented Development Guidelines and Residential Infill Guidelines) are intended to be somewhat flexible in their application, area specific plans are often more directive and less flexible. This can be reinforced by their method of adoption/enforcement. Guidelines can be received by City Council as information, or attached to Council

Policy as an Administrative Directive, which generally provides more flexibility than an Area Redevelopment Plan adopted by bylaw and studies adopted by resolution.

Guidelines, plans and studies can have significant costs and may require years to develop. Some cost savings can be gained by developing guidelines for large geographic areas rather than area specific plans and studies, because of the scale of application and because more detailed direction will require more time to negotiate between interested parties.

Over time, all guidelines, plans and studies will become outdated in some respect and should be monitored and updated to remain relevant and responsive to current trends. In times, or areas, of ongoing change, specific plans and studies tend to become outdated sooner than guidelines, because of their specificity. Due to their number and the cost and time to update them, Administration often amends guidelines, plans and studies comprehensively only on a priority basis, or via associated rezonings and only for the area being rezoned. Over time, plans and studies can also suffer from inadequate implementation without the City's operating and capital budget support.

Neglected or outdated plans and studies can cause concern for developers and residents because:

- some want to redevelop land in a manner that is not supported by the current direction of a plan/study, and some will be wary about redevelopment that does not strictly comply with the plan/study, and
- some are frustrated that initiatives, programs and capital improvements identified in the plan/study continue to go unfunded through successive budget cycles.

Recognizing the above and other ongoing work, Administration paused the 101 Avenue Corridor Study and reconsidered its approach to the application of planning and improvement tools throughout the mature areas of the city. First, allocation of limited resources for land use planning efforts to develop and implement plans/studies needs to be prioritized within larger frameworks. These frameworks are Nodes and Corridors, Neighbourhood Revitalization, and Neighbourhood Renewal. Second, land use planning tools need to be cost effective to apply and maintain and need to provide a reasonable ongoing balance between certainty and flexibility.

The intent of creating these frameworks is to identify areas of interest based on development pressures/potential, underdevelopment and decline, and capacity or deficiencies in infrastructure and programs. Integrating these frameworks presents opportunities for prioritizing, aligning and leveraging Administration's work and the City's budget to better build healthy and complete communities.

As a concept, nodes are locations of concentrated development and where people will congregate to live, work and play. They can occur at different scales, from local nodes in neighbourhoods, to places where important transportation routes intersect with frequent bus services, or where major elements of the transportation system may be accessed (such as, LRT Stations and Transit Centres). Depending on scale, nodes can emerge as Transit Oriented Developments (TOD); Downtown is Edmonton's most vigorous node and Transit Oriented Development.

Corridors also vary by scale and are important transportation routes that connect nodes. They may be fronted by mixed use, street oriented retail and higher density developments that serve the local area (residential and/or employment) and thereby provide ridership for the transit system. They can provide predominantly low density residential neighbourhoods with edges where opportunities for redevelopment and commercial activity is focused. Successful corridors function as both links and places, and provide opportunities for ongoing redevelopment.

The identification and application of a nodes and corridors network in Edmonton provides the basis for priority growth areas for intensified development and targeted public and private sector investment. This is key to facilitating more infill development and moving toward a more compact city. At the same time the network needs to be sized to focus investment. An overly large network disperses City investment and private sector interest.

Administration's ongoing work to define a Nodes and Corridors Network is being informed by the LRT Network and the Bus Network redesign. And while the 101 Avenue Corridor is tentatively identified as a high frequency bus corridor under the bus network redesign, it has not to date met other criteria to place it within the highest scales of a nodes and corridor network as follows:

- The corridor is not designated as a Main Street under the Edmonton Main Streets Guideline, and therefore does not qualify for funding consideration under the Complete Streets Program.
- The corridor commercial area is not part of a Business Improvement Area and therefore not eligible for the Facade Improvement or Development Incentive Program.
- The corridor is not on or near an approved LRT line. However, this corridor could form part of the future Festival/Energy LRT Line.
- The corridor is not prioritized in the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program.
- Neighbourhood renewal work for the abutting/nearby neighbourhoods of Terrace Heights, Capilano and Fulton Place was completed between 2010 and 2013.

Despite this misalignment with the identified frameworks:

- The corridor is relatively stable. Aside from a higher density residential development proposed for the Patricia Motel site and regulated through a Direct Control Provision, there have been no recent requests for rezoning or new development under existing zoning by the private sector.
- The draft Bus Network redesign has identified the corridor as a high frequency bus route, which in part will address the mobility challenges identified in draft Study.
- Neighbourhood commercial sites within the study area may be eligible for a future Corner Store Program.
- The Zoning Bylaw Main Streets Overlay has already been applied to the corridor and is intended to strengthen the pedestrian oriented character of Edmonton's main streets by requiring visual interest, transparent storefront overlays, and amenities for pedestrians,
- Considerable intensification opportunities already exist along portions of the corridor with relatively large sites being zoned RA7, RA8, and RA9 and CSC.
- Guidance to upzone the corridor already exists through the Residential Infill Guidelines, which identify sites along the corridor as suitable for Row Housing, Stacked Row Housing, and Low, Medium and High Rise Apartments.
- The corridor is a good candidate for bike lane infrastructure.

Conclusion

Edmonton's planning context is in transition. The City's long standing approach to redevelopment pressure in mature areas has been to apply Area Redevelopment Plans and studies on an area basis and with a fair degree of specificity. This approach is expensive to implement and maintain, and raises expectations for implementation that at times are not realized - either in controlling redevelopment or in funding identified improvements. Further, there is currently no approach in place to rescind or retire plans when they are no longer contributing to the growth and change of an area in alignment with City policy. As the new City Plan is intended to establish a development path toward a city of two million people that is compact, accessible, mobile, healthy, and climate resilient, it must identify and navigate within a set of integrated planning frameworks that better align Administration's efforts, creates more opportunities for intensification, and leverages existing and new infrastructure. Administration's work on modernizing these frameworks and the tools within them is ongoing.

While there will be circumstances to apply new plans and studies to a specific area, 101 Avenue is not a strong candidate. The corridor is stable relative to redevelopment pressure, and has adequate guidance for redevelopment through the Residential Infill Guidelines and the recent adoption of the Main Streets Zoning Bylaw Overlay. And while the corridor is not eligible for some of the identified improvements (e.g., complete streets treatments), it has been identified as a high frequency bus route, is eligible for

some roadway improvements, and could be eligible for the Corner Store Program funding and cycling infrastructure.

As Administration and the community have invested time and resources into the Study, some deliverable should be provided that captures the identified eligible improvements, but not necessarily through a statutory plan or study resolution. This could take the form of an implementation action plan that allows both Administration and the community to track the delivery of improvements as budget becomes available.

Given the above, the 101 Avenue Corridor Study should be put on hold until additional work by Administration is advanced at a framework and network level to identify the appropriate “tool” to capture the work and direction of the Study.

A full reconstruction of 101 Avenue, though not currently recommended from a lifecycle management perspective, does present an opportunity to align the direction of the draft Corridor Study with future arterial rehabilitation funding. Additional growth funding would be required to address the complete design aspects of the Corridor Study. As such, a potential streetscape project was included as part of the 2019 to 2028 Capital Investment Outlook. If Council directs Administration to proceed with the reconstruction of 101 Ave within the 2019-2022 Capital Budget, instead of the minor rehabilitation, other planned higher priority arterial projects would need to be deferred to the 2023-2026 Capital Budget.

Next Steps

Administration, through the City Plan, will continue work on the Nodes and Corridors Network and the tools that should be applied to these areas to ensure infill growth and reinvestment is optimized. At the same time the 101 Avenue corridor will continue to be monitored for eligibility and timing of improvements.

Administration’s work on the Evolving Infill project will be advanced for Council’s consideration in the near term. Evolving Infill is generally intended to advance the work of the previous Infill Roadmap through a number of new actions. Many of the identified actions will assist in guiding planning and infrastructure investment within mature residential areas. These actions include reviewing and updating existing policies, such as the Residential Infill Guidelines, including better supporting opportunities for the “missing middle” built forms, and identifying the infrastructure needed to support infill.

Work on the new City Plan is advancing and will include work on a city-wide planning framework that builds on the concept of prioritizing planning and investment in a coordinated manner to support priority growth areas.

As part of the new City Plan, the Zoning Bylaw will be reviewed and, among other things, be holistically amended to align with City Plan, and reflect current trends and needs in regulating the built form of a city of two million people.

Budget/Financial

There is no funding available within the approved 2015-2018 Arterial Renewal Composite for work on 101 Ave. An allowance for minor rehabilitation (which includes roadway resurfacing and isolated concrete spot repairs, with no functional improvements) of 101 Avenue between 50 Street and 75 Street is currently included in the proposed 2019-2022 Capital Budget.

Public Engagement

The community played a key role in initiating the Corridor Study, and was engaged throughout the development of the study. A range of well attended engagement events where participants were invited to advise on and help refine the content and direction of the 101 Avenue project included:

Event	Date	Number of People Engaged (Approximate)
Meetings with Forest/Terrace Community League members	2016-2017	Not Available
Jane's Walks - Led by the Community League and supported by City Staff	May 7, 2016 May 8, 2016	50 People
Community Workshop	June 21, 2016	212 People
Pop-up Engagements	Eight locations on various dates in July and August 2016	125 People
Community Open House	September 29, 2016	218 People
Community Open House	January 31, 2017	216 People

See Attachment 1 for more detailed information about the project's engagement activities.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Conditions of success			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)

Effective and efficient service delivery: project management processes are effective and encourage well-informed and integrated decision making.	Completion of 101 Ave Corridor Study.	Q2 2017	Q1 2017
	Completion of city-wide planning framework to prioritize planning and investment.	n/a	Q3 2020 (City Plan)

Attachments

1. Engagement Summary
2. 101 Avenue Corridor Study May 2017 Draft
3. Arterial Renewal Scope of Work
4. Implementation Actions

Others Reviewing this Report

- R. Kits / S. Padbury, Acting Deputy City Managers, Financial and Corporate Services
- M. Sturgeon, Acting Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services