

UPDATE TO CITY POLICY C573A - COMPLETE STREETS

Recommendation

That Urban Planning Committee recommend to City Council:

That the updated Complete Streets Policy C573B, as set out in Attachment 1 of the June 17, 2025, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS02777, be approved.

Requested Action		Council decision required	
ConnectEdmonton’s Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Healthy City	
City Plan Values	PRESERVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A Rebuildable City	Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities	Mobility Network
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the Corporation		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C573A - Complete Streets Policy		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">August 9, 2022, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS01193, Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards - Pedestrian Through ZonesSeptember 19, 2023, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS01428, Standards for Public Realm InfrastructureMarch 4, 2025, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS02941, Complete Streets - Design Policies, Standards and Guidelines Update - Verbal report		

Executive Summary

- The Complete Streets Policy (the Policy) and the Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards (the Standards) provide context sensitive direction for the planning, design and

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construction of Edmonton's streets. The Policy sets the broad direction for Edmonton's transportation network, while the Standards serve as the primary implementation tool. The Standards are a guidebook for designers, internal and external, defining how Edmonton's new and renewed streets are to be designed and built.

- The Policy was originally published in 2013 and has been updated once, in 2015. Several changes have occurred over the last decade, requiring modernization of the Policy.
- Feedback gathered through external engagement has helped refine the Policy update.
- The Policy has been updated to improve alignment with the City's current corporate strategic landscape, including The City Plan, Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy C602A and the Energy Transition and Climate Resiliency Strategy. This reflects the City's ongoing commitment to building a network of roadways that meet the needs of all Edmontonians.
- The Standards are being modernized by providing more robust guidance for the features expected in the design of walkable, accessible and livable neighbourhoods.
- The update to the Standards also includes a review of the cross-sections for local and collector roadways, including accommodation for above ground and below ground infrastructure requirements and effective operations and maintenance.
- The Policy updates recommended are for Council approval whereas the Standards referenced in the Policy are administrative and do not require Council approval. The Standards will continue to evolve and adapt over time and this will include ongoing collaboration with industry partners.

REPORT

The Complete Streets Policy (the Policy) and the Complete Design and Construction Standards (the Standards) provide context sensitive direction for the planning, design and construction of Edmonton's streets. The Policy and Standards apply to all projects in the public road right-of-way that are under the City's jurisdiction. The Policy sets the broad direction for Edmonton's transportation network and requires Council approval. The Standards, while administrative, are the primary implementation tool and serve as a guidebook for designers. Key changes to the Standards are included in this report to highlight the implications of how Edmonton's new and renewed streets are to be built going forward.

Over time, use of these documents creates a mobility system that will provide travel options for users by accommodating the needs of all modes of travel in a safe, context sensitive manner (i.e. a network of complete streets). To accomplish this, some streets will prioritize certain modes over others. For example, a complete street in a shopping district may place priority on a person walking, cycling and riding public transit. At the same time, a freeway will provide for high quality motor vehicle commuter traffic and goods movements. While each street in a network may not be designed to accommodate or prioritize every mode of transportation, the streets and off-street pathways network will provide travel options for users of all modes.

Complete Streets Policy

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The Complete Streets Policy aims to ensure that streets are designed to reflect the surrounding area, are safe and welcoming to all users and contribute to the quality of life, competitiveness and growth of the city.

Since the Policy was originally published 10 years ago, several changes have occurred requiring modernization. The updated Policy (Attachment 1) provides improved alignment with the City's current corporate strategic landscape, including The City Plan, Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy C602, the Safe Mobility Strategy, and the Energy Transition Strategy and Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan.

Several motions related to Complete Streets have also helped shape the updated Policy's direction. The updated Policy responds to Council direction by better reflecting the City's commitment to safe and accessible infrastructure and emphasizing the value of public right-of-way for trees and urban greenery. The updated Policy captures that public trees are a priority for all streets, while the Standards outline where and how trees can be accommodated.

The updated Policy also reinforces the expectation that transportation projects within the City of Edmonton will follow the Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards.

Attachment 2 provides a detailed comparison of the changes between the previous policy, C573A, and the updated policy, C573B.

The Policy update was prepared in collaboration with representatives from across Administration, including City Operations, Urban Planning and Economy and Integrated Infrastructure Services. External engagement was completed to gather input and refine the updated Policy further. Details regarding the external engagement, feedback received and how that feedback was incorporated is provided in the Community Insight section of this report.

Per the Corporate Policy Framework, the Policy will be reviewed every four years going forward.

Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards (the Standards)

As noted, the Standards provide the basis for implementing the Complete Streets Policy. The Standards are also being updated to reflect the City's current strategic landscape, to reflect best practices in street design across other Alberta and Canadian municipalities and to address input received since the last update. The Policy updates recommended are for Council approval whereas the Standards referenced in the Policy are administrative and do not require Council approval. The Standards will continue to evolve and adapt over time and this will include ongoing collaboration with industry partners.

While a significant number of changes are being made to refresh the Standards, one of the more substantial changes is the development of new guidance related to neighbourhood design. Neighbourhood streets in Edmonton are expected to be designed to encourage motorists to drive slower and exercise caution, contributing to the City's goal of achieving Vision Zero through safe and liveable streets. The new content within the Standards will provide specific context regarding where, when and what infrastructure is required to incorporate to support a 40 km/hr speed limit. To create naturally calm streets by encouraging operating speeds of no more than 40 km/hr in residential neighbourhoods, traffic calming measures are required to be engineered into the design of collector roadways predominantly, though also in unique, context specific

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applications on local roads. The updated Standards are also designed to limit negative effects on emergency response agencies and operational costs.

Another substantial update to the Standards included a complete review of local and collector roadways' cross-sections. This included reviewing both above ground and below ground infrastructure requirements to ensure that the cross-sections provided are constructable and can be operated and maintained effectively.

The updated cross-sections and the new neighbourhood layout guidelines set the framework for designing more walkable, accessible and livable neighbourhoods that promote mode shift and provide better travel options for Edmontonians.

Cost Considerations

Cost considerations have factored into the update to the Standards. The design and initial construction are a small portion of the overall life of an asset. The vast majority of an asset's life is in the phases following initial construction. That said, the decisions made in the initial design and construction phases have a significant impact on the overall lifecycle of the asset, its functionality and operational cost. The updated Standards will influence initial construction costs, lifecycle costs, snow and ice control costs, and operations and maintenance costs. Analysis of these impacts are summarized below, with Attachment 3 providing further detail on the cost impacts of the updated Standards. It should be noted that cost impacts are also dependent on many other factors such as the cross-section used, traffic calming features applied, construction costs, land use context, etc.

- **Initial construction costs:** The updated Standards have the potential to both increase or decrease the costs of initial construction. An exact impact to initial construction cost related to the updated standards is hard to define as it is dependent on the elements incorporated into the design of a roadway.
 - Range of anticipated cost impact: -3 to +13 per cent
 - Construction costs may further increase dependent on the traffic calming elements selected during design and construction.
- **Lifecycle costs:** The updated Standards have the potential to increase or decrease the asset's lifecycle cost over 70 years based on decisions about how the local and collector road network is laid out and the cross-sections and other design features that are selected.
 - Range of anticipated lifecycle cost impact: -7 to +10.6 per cent
- **Operating costs:** The updated Standards will have a range of possible operating costs, including related to snow and ice control and street sweeping.
 - The largest impact will be associated with the requirement for collector roads to include a shared pathway on one side and a sidewalk on the other side (as compared to a sidewalk on both sides per previous Standards). Shared pathways are part of the City's responsibility for snow clearing, however the associated incremental operating cost increase will vary depending on the amount of added and/or adjacent shared pathways. Therefore cost increases for snow clearing of added shared pathways are not included as part of the cost comparisons in this report.

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- The updated Standards have also given careful consideration to snow storage requirements, such as boulevards, which directly influence roadway operations and user experience.
- **Maintenance costs:** Updated Standards directly influence ongoing maintenance costs.
 - The updated design Standards' impact on the maintenance costs in a single year is estimated to range from cost neutral to a reduction up to -25.5 per cent.
- **Safety Programs:** Initial construction utilizing the updated Standards will contribute to the City's goal of Vision Zero by creating safe and walkable communities and contribute to overall savings for the City through the elimination of the need for the City to retrofit streets post-construction.
 - Depending on the scope and scale of the project, each Street Lab installation initially costs approximately \$80,000, plus ongoing maintenance until the project's adaptable materials are replaced with permanent infrastructure or removed. The average annual maintenance cost for each Street Lab is approximately \$3,000.

The updated Standards have the potential for greater initial construction cost impacts compared to those illustrated in Attachment 3. New developments often apply a range of cross-sections, some of which are more closely aligned with pre-2018 Standards. In these instances, the initial cost impacts may be more notable. The analysis in Attachment 3 focused on the cost impacts of the updated 2025 Standards in comparison to the Standards set in 2018.

Community Insight

Public engagement regarding the updated Policy was conducted in March and April 2025 via online meetings, surveys and one-on-one sessions. Feedback gathered through external engagement has helped refine the Policy update.

Attachment 4 includes a summary of the feedback and how it was considered. Appendix A of Attachment 4 includes the list of participants engaged regarding the updated Policy. This included representatives from the development industry, accessibility advocacy groups, utility companies and other targeted stakeholder groups.

Feedback indicated strong support for the Policy's alignment with The City Plan and its focus on creating safe, inclusive and accessible streets. The majority of respondents agreed that the Policy's objectives were consistent with the broader strategic vision for Edmonton's transportation network. Specifically, there was overwhelming agreement with bundling policy statements under The City Plan's Big City Moves, as this provided clarity on how street development aligns with the City's overall planning direction.

Respondents also shared concerns and suggestions, including the Policy's vagueness, which could lead to inconsistent application. They desired clearer, more practical steps for implementation. Some respondents felt the Policy lacked tangible outcomes and simply repeated existing objectives.

The following key themes emerged through the engagement regarding the Policy:

- **Policy Alignment:** Strong support for alignment with The City Plan and its objectives.

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- Clarity and Specificity: Clearer, more practical implementation steps and less ambiguous language are needed.
- Cost Implications: Emphasis on comprehensive cost-benefit analysis and consideration of long-term costs and benefits, including environmental factors and underground infrastructure.
- Active Transportation: Prioritization of active transportation infrastructure and encouragement of modal shift.
- Climate Resilience: Importance of climate resilience and sustainability in street design and construction.
- Underground Infrastructure: Desire to acknowledge and address the impact of underground infrastructure.

Feedback collected through Safe Mobility programs, including Towards 40, Vision Zero Street Labs, and other city-wide initiatives, highlighted a consistently strong demand for community-focused traffic calming measures. These engagement efforts captured residents' lived experiences and priorities related to traffic safety in their neighbourhoods. Input gathered through these programs has informed the City's technical expertise and directly contributed to the development of the neighbourhood traffic calming components within the updated design Standards. This ensures the Standards reflect both evidence-based practices and community-identified needs.

GBA+

Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) considerations are essential factors in developing City policies and standards, as well as in the planning and design of infrastructure projects. GBA+ considerations, such as universal accessibility, have influenced the City's Complete Street Policy, Complete Streets Standards and Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy C602, which play an essential part in how the City's infrastructure is designed. While the update to the Complete Streets Standards is planned as a refresh, rather than a rewrite, evaluation of best practices and other research will inform whether updates may be required to ensure the standards consider equity in the design and construction of Edmonton's mobility network.

As projects advance, public engagement is also critical in influencing how projects are planned and designed for those who use or wish to use City infrastructure. A detailed GBA+ review for Edmonton's transportation infrastructure projects is commonly initiated during a project's planning and design phases.

GBA+ is conducted to identify stakeholders through the development of public engagement plans and identify meaningful ways of connecting with those stakeholders to gather input that will help shape the plans and designs. The process supports Administration in identifying interested parties who may be impacted by the project and those who may be less likely to participate in traditional engagement methods.

The input gathered often leads to the incorporation of equity measures that enhance the accessibility and usability of Edmonton's mobility network. Such measures include universal accessibility enhancements, such as the widening of active mode infrastructure, enhanced pedestrian through zones, and accessibility ramps. Further, these measures also factor into the

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construction phase of projects, such as setting detours or wayfinding during construction for people who walk, bike or roll.

Environment and Climate Review

The updated Complete Streets Policy is aligned with a variety of City policies, including Edmonton's Community Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan. Some of the features that have environment and climate linkages include:

- Multimodal options that enable more active transportation have the potential to reduce vehicle traffic, resulting in lower community greenhouse gas emissions and improved local air quality.
- Increased tree canopy, retention of mature trees and naturalized areas have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and local air quality, as well as provide cooling to mitigate urban heat island effects and more extreme heat events.
- Naturalized areas, wildlife passages and low impact development can help mitigate the impact of severe flooding events and create habitats for birds, mammals, insects and fungi.

Additional information related to the Environmental and Climate Review is available in Attachment 5.

Attachments

1. Council Policy C573B - Complete Streets
2. Policy Update - Summary of Changes
3. Standards Update and Cost Analysis
4. Complete Streets Policy - What We Heard Report
5. Environment and Climate Review