

2026 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

Recommendation

That the February 23, 2026, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS03361, be received for information.

Requested Action	Information only
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Urban Places
City Plan Values	ACCESS
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the Corporation
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C569 Optimization of the Transportation System Network • C544 Active Transportation • Accessibility for People with Disabilities
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 25, 2025, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS03087, IIS Capital Projects • February 25, 2025, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS02750, Transportation Projects Traffic Management (Q1 2025) • February 11, 2025, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS02745, Valley Line West 2025 Roadway Construction Options and Impacts

Executive Summary

- The City of Edmonton has reviewed traffic implications of projects over recent years and particularly in 2025 and is working on additional strategies for 2026 to complete projects and mitigate traffic impacts.
- In 2026, the City of Edmonton's traffic management plan includes:
 - Improved sequencing of projects - finding opportunities to reduce overlapping and knockon effects between projects.

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- Prioritize innovation - working with industry on opportunities to accelerate work using innovative design and constructability techniques.
 - Proactive operational coordination – minimizing disruption and mitigating safety issues by proactively including operational teams in project planning early in the process.
 - Improved integration - advance and regular engagement with developers and utility companies to understand their construction work plans and integrate these effects together with the City's infrastructure program.
 - Better communication - proactive discussions with the community and businesses as well as improved messaging and notifications to commuters.
- Administration uses traffic modeling to assess and analyze both the individual and collective impacts on the entire traffic network. The modeling allows for a comprehensive opportunity to test the collective effects of infrastructure projects by the City, developers, and utility owners.
 - Administration incorporates various strategies to mitigate traffic impacts beginning at early stages of planning and budgeting for major capital projects, such as adjusting construction timelines, sequencing or staging construction in phases and adjusting traffic signal operations on critical detour routes.
 - Proactive and regular communication is a crucial element of an effective traffic management plan, ensuring public awareness and helping Edmontonians navigate the city before and during construction.
 - The 2026 traffic management plan will be presented at the February 23, 2026, Infrastructure Committee. The presentation includes details about traffic impacts associated with infrastructure projects with notable traffic disruptions.

REPORT

In 2025, the city experienced a challenging traffic season. Many members of the public and business community shared their concerns with Administration and City Council as the traffic routing in different areas experienced above-normal delays due to a variety of causes, including impacts from construction.

The City is currently implementing an ambitious capital program with many significant projects, such as Valley Line West and Yellowhead Freeway, making construction progress in 2025. In addition, the City's traffic network is challenged by population growth as over 100,000 people moved to the City between 2023 to 2025¹, and an additional 80,000 licensed drivers were added to the road network during that period.² Further, household travel patterns are evolving.

¹ "Edmonton - Population". Government of Alberta, regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/edmonton/population/#/?from=2021&to=2025

² Licensed Drivers in Alberta by Selected Municipality 2021-2025, Government of Alberta, <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/67db8a70-e2db-48c8-b567-c82a8a5b7362/resource/54547b85-14a3-4d60-86f1-2a7f7ec9ec3a/download/tec-licensed-drivers-select-municipalities-2025.pdf>

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Major construction is inherently disruptive for people who live, work, and travel in Edmonton. It can change traffic patterns, create safety challenges, and leave people uncertain about what to expect. To reduce these impacts and improve the reliability of traffic routing, the 2026 traffic management program will adopt a more integrated, proactive, coordinated planning approach with Parks and Roads Services.

Together, these actions focus on delivering construction projects in a way that prioritizes safety, supports reliable movement across the network, and keeps people informed about what is happening and how the City is working to reduce disruption.

Traffic Management

Traffic management encompasses the many activities undertaken to inform decision making related to the operation of the City's mobility network. These activities range from advanced, city-wide programming discussions to the active administration of roadway activity permits and contract management of roadway contractors.

Together, the 2026 traffic management plan focuses on delivering construction projects in a way that prioritizes safety, supports reliable movement across the network, and keeps people informed about what is happening and how the City is working to reduce disruption.

For 2026, the overall City traffic management plan includes:

- **Improved sequencing of projects** - finding opportunities to reduce overlapping and knock on effects between projects.
 - While major projects continue, including Valley Line West LRT, Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion and Imagine Jasper Avenue, remaining corridors are protected.
 - To mitigate cumulative traffic impacts in particular around the Downtown, Administration is deferring the construction of Low Level Bridge (NB) from 2026 to 2027.
- **Prioritize Innovation** - working with industry on opportunities to accelerate work using innovative design and constructability techniques.
 - Using contractual tools to incentivize innovation and reduce impact on traffic.
 - Working with contractors to limit construction impacts to off-peak times.
 - Working with contractors on design and schedule innovations to minimize disruptions and complete work faster.
- **Proactive operational coordination** - minimizing disruption and mitigating safety issues by proactively including operational teams in project planning early in the process.
 - Modelling traffic impacts more frequently during the construction season to better understand vulnerabilities in the network and better protect the level of service of key corridors.
 - Planning and implementing proactive traffic calming in neighbourhoods adjacent to significant or long term projects to reduce shortcutting, speeding, and unsafe driver behaviour.
 - Strengthening safety design and construction accommodations to better protect vulnerable road users navigating active work zones.

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- Identifying and implementing signal timing and control adjustments on adjacent and connected corridors to support traffic flow as travel patterns shift; and
- providing clearer, earlier communication about expected impacts and mitigation measures, including using the City's existing notification tool to deliver construction updates to subscribers, and expanding direct outreach to residents in neighbourhoods adjacent to significant or long term projects.
- **Improved integration** - working with developers and utility companies to understand their construction program(s) and involving operational areas early in project planning.
 - Working with key partners, including EPCOR, ATCO and developers to improve information on project plans for 2026.
 - Adding a role within Administration (i.e. Downtown Capital Projects Integration Manager) which is focused on proactively assessing risks and opportunities to support improved integration, coordination, and performance oversight among projects, all aimed at ensuring the successful delivery of the capital program while minimizing disruptions to the public, businesses improvement associations (BIA), and interested parties within downtown.
 - As the City of Edmonton continues to plan for a city of 2 million people, regular rehabilitation projects and major transformational projects are both required. We are planning for this growth and considering the sequencing of major (and potentially disruptive) projects into the future.
- **Better communication** - proactive discussions with communities/neighbourhoods, as well as using navigation tools, to provide accurate realtime reporting.
 - Sharing project specific information via building.edmonton.ca, dedicated project websites and newsletters.
 - The recent development of a Downtown Construction newsletter allows for the opportunity to consistently and regularly provide updates on City infrastructure projects.
 - Distributing construction bulletins locally to provide advance notice of traffic disruptions or changes to property access during active construction.
 - Sharing information about upcoming traffic and access changes in advance of or during construction via business wayfinding signs and static and dynamic road signs.
 - Updating the City's Traffic Disruptions Map (edmonton.ca/traffic) to provide current details on traffic disruptions throughout the city.
 - Sharing information through media notices and events, including traffic disruption notices, public service announcements, social media, in-person pre-construction events and open houses, direct mail, email subscription lists, advertisements (including radio advertisements targeted at drivers and commuters), site signage and more.
 - Continued engagement with community leagues and the business community.
 - Sending updates to navigation tools, including Apple and Google maps.
 - Sharing information in weekly update emails to Council and providing direct communications to Councillors as needed.

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Traffic Modelling

Traffic modelling is a key tool used to support the pre-construction planning of major capital projects. This tool, which includes all main roadways for the entire city, is applied in a three-fold process:

- **Baseline Analysis:** Analyzes morning and afternoon peak-period volumes in the fall of the previous year to establish a baseline of traffic flow across the network.
- **Impact Assessment:** Reviews anticipated lane and intersection restrictions across all major projects, including City of Edmonton projects, utility work, and private development, to understand impacts on the main roadway network.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Uses the assessment results to inform critical adjustments to project timing and the level of roadway restriction to minimize network impact.

Administration did complete traffic modelling to assess the 2026 proposed infrastructure including inputs from the City, utility owners, and developers. The results demonstrate that the City's traffic network does experience challenges during peak-hour events and those are generally focused in areas encompassing major multiyear projects such as Valley Line LRT West, and Yellowhead Freeway. It is anticipated that the 2026 program is largely influenced by carry forward projects with limited new infrastructure projects expected to start in 2026.

The following locations include corridors where operations are anticipated to improve in 2026:

- Yellowhead Freeway between 97 and 121 Street
- 104 Avenue between 105 and 121 Street
- Whitemud Drive between Anthony Henday Drive and 215 Street

The following locations include corridors where operations are anticipated to decrease in 2026:

- 215 Street south and north of Whitemud Drive
- 50 Street and Anthony Henday Interchange
- 41 Avenue SW east of Queen Elizabeth Highway

Traffic relief is anticipated to begin in fall 2026 with the anticipated completion of several impactful multi year projects including:

- Wellington Bridge (102 Avenue)
- 95 Avenue (163 to 170 Street)
- Terwillegar Stage 2 (Whitemud Drive at Rainbow Valley Bridge)

Traffic capacity will be protected in select parallel corridors to major projects (i.e. 100 Avenue, 107 Avenue, 111 Avenue, 118 Avenue, etc.) as well as key traffic nodes such as bridge river crossings. Administration provides oversight of on-site traffic controls through the On-Street Construction and Maintenance (OSCAM) permit approval process. Throughout the 2026 construction period, Administration will be conducting regular on-site reviews of conditions and traffic flow, making modifications and adjustments on a case-by-case basis to ensure the 2026 plan's effectiveness. Maintaining multi-modal access to homes, businesses and community amenities, with adequate

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accommodations for transit, cyclists, pedestrians and cars, and emergency vehicles access remains a priority throughout this process.

2026 Major Capital Construction Projects

The majority of infrastructure projects with traffic impacts extending longer than a few weeks undergo a review of project-specific traffic requirements. These requirements include an integrated and technical review of both constructability and traffic provisions, which must be approved before the project can proceed to construction. Project recommendations often cover aspects such as construction staging (e.g. full closure versus staged improvements, hours-of-work restrictions like avoiding peak hours, seasonal programming due to weather related influences), or contract provisions (e.g. site occupancy or lane occupancy fees to incentivize pace of completion). These requirements are iteratively assessed throughout the design process and are integral to the tendering process, to ensure the construction industry has a clear understanding of the City's objectives for carrying out the work. Often, these provisions are a direct cost driver affecting the overall productivity of the work and the timelines to complete the project.

Administration has, and is continuing to review, the traffic related impacts of major capital projects occurring in 2026, which includes an overall traffic management plan for the construction season. The plan includes information about the full scope of 2026 projects, including their anticipated impacts and corresponding mitigation strategies. In some instances, there may be emerging work that is not part of the planned capital program (e.g. emergency closures, applications for private developments, etc.), that could occur throughout the year. Administration will monitor and review all of the requests and will adapt mitigation strategies (which could include, delaying or modifying the construction staging) to ensure the traffic network is moving as efficiently as possible.

The plan will be shared with Council at the February 23, 2026, Infrastructure Committee as part of a companion presentation to this report. The presentation includes details about traffic impacts associated with the Valley Line West LRT, Yellowhead Freeway, and other projects with notable traffic disruptions. The approach for 2026 is informed by a number of inputs, including carry-forward projects currently underway and lessons learned from the 2025 construction season. Particular attention is being made to avoid the risk of adding cumulative traffic impacts to existing constrained corridors in and around downtown.

Community Insight

Construction on the existing transportation network is inherently disruptive, requiring users to alter their travel habits during construction. Communication and advance notice of construction impacts help the travelling public make informed choices about their daily travel. Administration uses various communications tools, such as business wayfinding signs and road signs, to share information with the public and encourage access to affected areas.

Community feedback can influence the design and construction of transportation projects. This may include identifying enhancements to the transportation network or feedback that helps Administration understand and mitigate construction-related issues such as access restrictions, pedestrian safety and displacement and safety of vulnerable populations. For example, in 2025,

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an Edmonton Insight Community survey related to accelerated roadwork for Valley Line West provided valuable insight about Edmontonians' preference for more intensive construction (e.g. a complete intersection closure) for the benefit of an overall reduction in the length of disruptions.

GBA+

Planning for traffic impacts and the implementation of accommodation strategies is particularly important for major capital projects that significantly impact transit or active modes, as these forms of traffic disruption may disproportionately impact those who rely on such travel modes to meet their daily needs.

GBA+ is used throughout the development process of individual capital construction projects. All roadway projects that have potential accessibility impacts are considered. Some of the considerations at a project level include:

- **Accessibility:** Ensure accessibility requirements for people with disabilities are in place in the surrounding areas; accessibility is considered at each stage of the project design.
- **Safety:** Incorporate the needs of diverse demographics to improve safety within existing and new facilities.
- **Usability:** Consider how asset renewal and new assets improve the usability of municipal assets for those working in them and for others who use them for business or other purposes.

Environment and Climate Review

Mitigation strategies are implemented to manage traffic impacts and reduce vehicle idling and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) during transportation project construction. However, GHG emissions are not quantified during the construction phase; rather, GHG benefits are quantified once projects become operational.

The transportation sector is responsible for one quarter of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. By managing the effects of construction and investing in public transit and active transportation infrastructure, the total vehicle kilometres travelled and GHG emissions can be reduced. Further, designing infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling contributes to healthier and more sustainable cities.