

112 AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION

Traffic Lane Reduction and Concept Planning Study
Public Involvement Report 2012-13



OVERVIEW

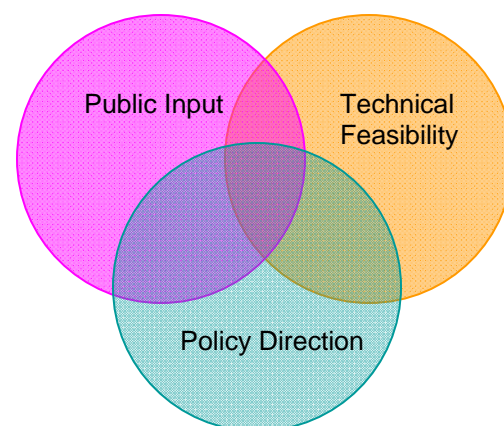
In 2012, the City of Edmonton initiated a traffic lane reduction and concept planning study in advance of reconstruction work planned for 112 Avenue between 50 and 68 Streets in 2014. This work is a follow-up to a 2006-07 study that initially reviewed the potential to reduce the number of lanes in the area. At the time, City Council directed administration to review the lane reduction concept with stakeholders before future reconstruction work began.

Input from stakeholders, user groups, and the public, along with a review of the technical feasibility and policy direction, all played a role in the developing the recommendation.

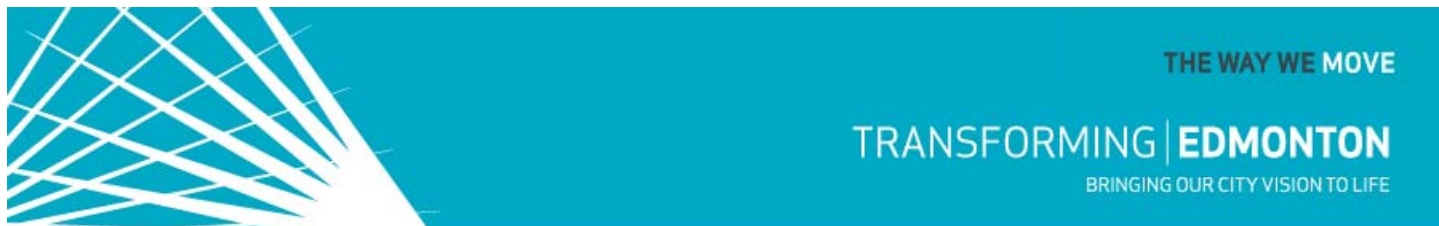
PROCESS

The public involvement process involved a series of meetings and online consultation to reach broad range of participants in a study area bordered by Wayne Gretzky Drive, Yellowhead Trail, and the River Valley. By the project's conclusion, 751 people participated at public meetings and through online consultation. A further 900 participants were involved in a telephone survey.

Developing the Recommendation



September 2012: Pre-consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of interviews and telephone conversations were held to identify key issues, important stakeholders, and to review the draft public involvement plan • 26 interviews were held
November 2012: Community Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two community workshops were held to get perspectives on the benefits and drawbacks of both the four-lane and three lane options, and to identify high-use areas along the corridor that might benefit from aesthetic enhancements • Online consultation was also held • 373 people participated in the workshops and the online survey



December 2012: Review plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans for the three and four-lane options were again presented with some modifications based on feedback from the November workshops. Additional input was sought on pedestrian safety, walkability, green space and street side trees and shrubs, and bus pullouts 106 people attended the December 11 open house, and 21 people completed the online survey
January 2013: Telephone poll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated in early January 2013 to confirm results from the public involvement sessions with a statistically significant sample. 900 participants completed the telephone survey within the study area.
January 29, 2013: Info-share with recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A final information session was held to share information about the recommendation administration will take forward to Council. The session was an opportunity for participants to understand more about the recommendation, and address any questions in advance of the Council decision. 82 participants attended the session and 143 completed the online survey.

KEY THEMES: WHAT WE HEARD

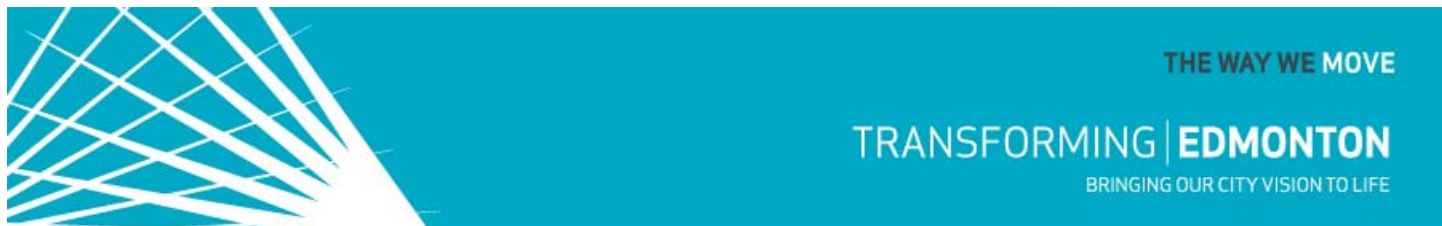
Overall, the input revealed that the most important factors to consider for the reconstruction of 112 Avenue include enhancing walkability and pedestrian safety, traffic flow, and residential access. The vast majority of participants within the study area are concerned a lane reduction will impact traffic and travel times on 112 Avenue. Within the directly adjacent communities of Highlands and Bellevue, there are strongly divided opinions. Many believe there will be great community benefits from reducing a traffic lane. At the same time, many express strong concern about the potential traffic and community impacts that could come from the lane reduction.

SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2012: PRE-CONSULTATION

A number of pre-consultation interviews were held with key stakeholders to review the proposed public involvement plan and the tools planned to gather input and share information about the process. The interviews were also opportunities to understand more about the stakeholders in the area and what they perceived as key factors to review in the study. A total of 45 interview requests were made, and a total of 26 interviews were completed with representatives for:

- Community Leagues: Highlands, Beverly Heights
- Neighbourhoods: Highlands, Beverly Heights, Bellevue, Bergman, Beacon Heights
- Commuters
- Businesses: Highlands 112 Avenue businesses, Beverly Business Association
- Other: Renew 1.1.2. stakeholder group, St. Clare Catholic Parish, St. Mary's Anglican Church, Highlands Historical Society, Edmonton Public School Board.

As a result of these interviews, some planned communications activities were modified, some new stakeholders were identified, and key themes and issues were defined around safety, traffic flow, community, and land reduction.



NOVEMBER 2012: COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Two community workshops (November 7 and 21, 2012) and an online survey (November 6-23, 2012) were held to gather input from a broad cross-section of the communities in the study area about which factors and design elements needed to be considered in the process, and how these should be applied on both the three and four-lane concepts. A total of 373 people attended the workshops or participated online.

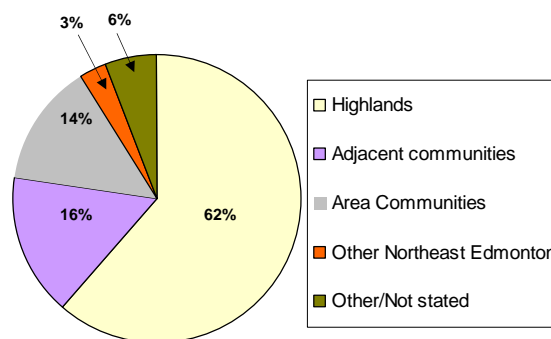
As part of the exercise, respondents were asked to rank the importance of several factors in the concept planning process. Pedestrian safety was identified as the most important factor. Improved walkability, smooth traffic flow, reduced vehicle speeds and residential access rounded out the most consistently ranked themes. Residents identified the busiest activity centres along 112 Avenue as the commercial area and adjacent blocks (62 to 68 Street), and the area from 50 Street to 55 Street (past Mount Royal School).

There was consistent sentiment the current location of the signalized pedestrian crosswalks provide access where they are needed most. However, it was suggested the crosswalk at 53 Street may need to be upgraded with a signal.

Participants had divided views about both the four and three-lane concepts. The four-lane concept was recognized for ensuring the best through traffic flow. And many felt the sidewalks and the vehicle turn opportunities were adequate. The three-lane concept was recognized for adding boulevard space between the sidewalk and the roadway, which some felt was better for pedestrian safety. Also, some appreciated the dedicated left-turn opportunities provided in the three-lane concept.

A strong difference of opinion was demonstrated in the response to two key questions that were asked independently of discussion on the specific concepts. On one question participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with maintaining low travel times on 112 Avenue for commuters. Another asked participants to identify how important it would be to reduce a traffic lane as a design element. The answers demonstrate a strong polarization of views regarding the potential traffic lane reduction.

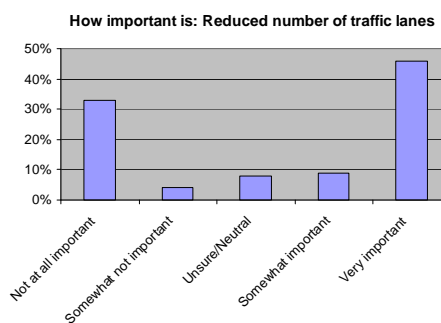
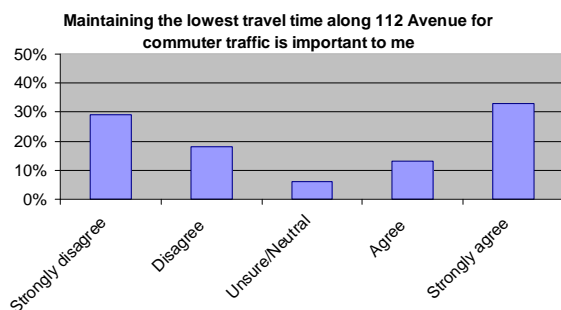
Participation by Community

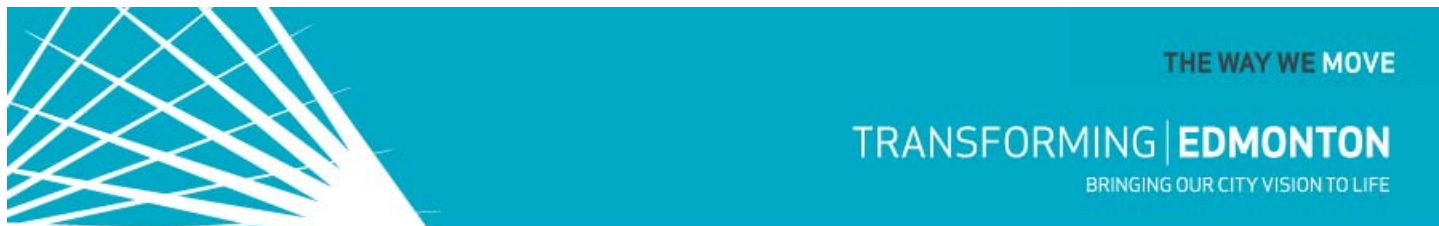


Adjacent communities include: Bellevue, Virginia Park, Montrose, Newton, Bergman, Beacon Heights

Area communities include: Beverly Heights, Rundle Heights, Abbottsfield

Other Northeast Edmonton communities include: Clareview, Bannerman, Brintnell, Fraser, McLeod, York





DECEMBER 2012: REVIEW PLANS

In December, plans for the concepts were presented with some modifications to the three-lane option based on feedback from the November workshops. Additional input was sought to better understand input on pedestrian safety and walkability. In addition, there was a need to have a more in-depth conversation about bus pullouts. There were a number of participants who expressed concern about the traffic impacts from bus stops in the three-lane scenario, and it was suggested that bus pullouts would resolve this. However, the bus pullouts can not physically be accommodated in the corridor. So additional discussion was needed to understand how integral the bus pullouts were to shaping opinions.

A total of 106 participants attended the session and 21 responded to the online questionnaire.

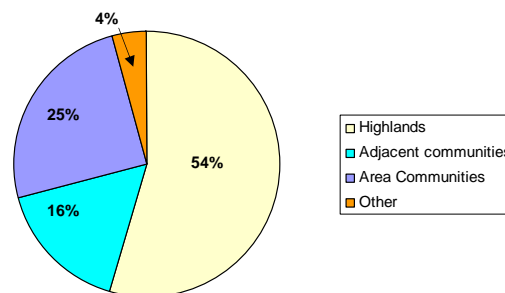
Participants were asked to provide a further definition around walkability and pedestrian safety. The highest ranked items they identified as being important to provide for walkability and pedestrian safety included wider sidewalks, good access to controlled crossings of 112 Avenue, and a buffer between the sidewalk and the street.

When asked to identify which areas along 112 Avenue are the most appropriate for enhancements such as greenspaces and street side tree and shrub plantings, the vast majority (61%) indicated the section of 112 Avenue between 68 and 62 Street, including the commercial area.

Respondents were also asked to rank four factors in terms of how important they felt they are to the community. The factor ranked most important was "Maintaining the lowest travel time along 112 Avenue", and the lowest in importance was "Providing dedicated left turn opportunities off of 112 Avenue into the community".

Participants were asked to rank how important the provision of bus bays or bus pullouts are to the success of the three-lane concept. Over half (49 or 56%) of those who responded to this question feel bus bays are somewhat or very important to the success of the three-lane concept. Just over one quarter feel that they are somewhat or not at all important, and a further 15 or 17% are unsure.

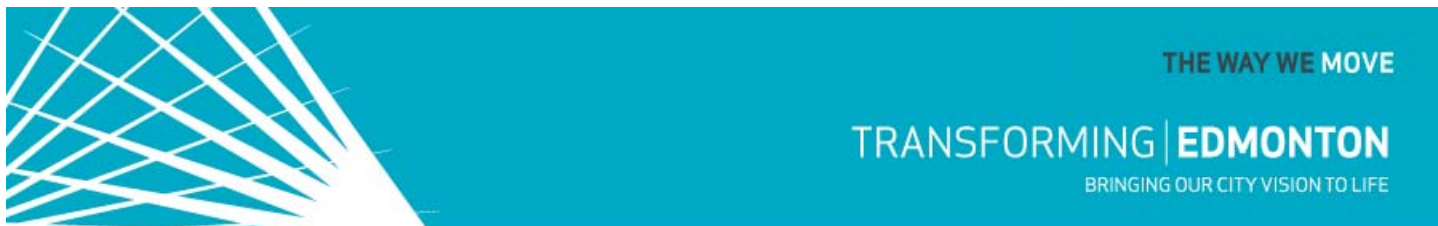
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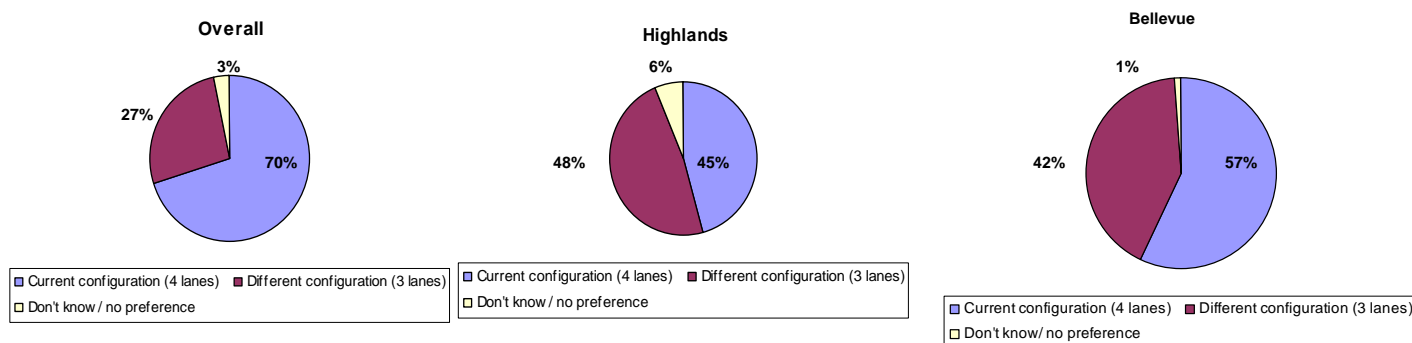
Other communities include: Parkdale, Hermitage, Kernohan, and Millwoods



JANUARY 2013: TELEPHONE POLL

In early January 2013, a telephone poll was commissioned to review results from the public involvement sessions with a statistically significant sample. 900 participants completed the telephone survey within the study area.

The survey reviewed both the existing four-lane configuration and the potential three-lane configuration. At the conclusion of the survey, participants identified the scenario they preferred. The results showed that, overall, the vast majority of the community would prefer to keep the four-lane configuration, while there was divided support in the two directly adjacent communities of Highlands and Bellevue.

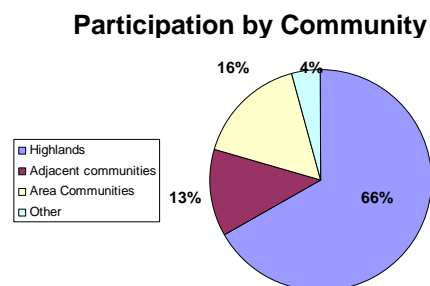


JANUARY 29, 2013: INFORMATION SESSION TO PRESENT RECOMMENDATION

A final information session was held to reveal the recommendation administration will take to Council for a decision in March 2013. This session provided an opportunity for participants to learn more about the rationale behind the recommendation. A total 82 individuals attended the open house and a further 93 individuals completed the online survey.

This session and related survey asked about the clarity of the information used to describe the recommended option and satisfaction with the public involvement process.

About 54% felt that the rationale for what is included in the recommendation had been clearly explained. A third disagreed or strongly disagreed and 13% were unsure or neutral. A number of respondents felt the residents in the Highlands community should have a greater say in the design of the roadway because it runs through their neighbourhood. Some suggested more clarity was needed around why bus pullouts could not be implemented.



Adjacent communities include: Bellevue, Virginia Park, Montrose, Newton, Bergman, Downtown

Area Communities include: Beverly Heights, Rundle Heights

Other includes: Clareview, Sifton Park, Alberta Beach, Millwoods, Balwin, Other

Some individuals felt the public consultation process was great, while others felt the decision had already been made before consulting the public. Just over half of the respondents (51.6%) indicated they were satisfied with the efforts to consider public input in this project, while a little over a third of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remaining 15.7% were unsure or neutral.