



Downtown LRT Connector

Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

Following City Council's approval of the Downtown LRT Connector Corridor study on June 21, 2010, a Concept Planning study was initiated to define where the LRT would fit within the approved corridor, where LRT stops would be located, and what type of access changes would be required for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

A public involvement process was initiated to support the planning study, and to identify local issues and impacts that needed to be addressed through the planning process. The process had three key stages:

September to October 2010 – Review options

A number of options for the LRT alignment, LRT stop locations, pedestrian and cyclist connections, and vehicle access changes were reviewed with a broad range of community, commercial/business, active transportation, transit user and institutional stakeholders. The options were also posted online at www.edmonton.ca/LRT projects. Over 120 people participated by attending presentations, interviews, and by completing questionnaires.

November 2010 – Collect feedback on draft Concept Plan

With consideration of technical study and stakeholder input, a draft Concept Plan was developed and presented to the public at an open house on November 2, 2010. A total of 148 people attended that open house. Feedback from that open house will be presented to City Council as part of the decision-making process

December to March 2011 – Collect feedback on Recommended Concept Plan

Following presentation of the draft Concept Plan *for information* at the December 8, 2010 meeting of the Transportation and Public Works Committee and following subsequent revisions to that plan, the project team began to re-engage key stakeholders and the public in March 2011 and this stage culminated in the recommended concept plan being presented at an Information Session held on April 28, 2011

Summary of Key Themes – All Stages of Consultation

There is overarching support for additional LRT service in the Downtown, which is a benefit to the businesses, institutions and community in the area, and as a focal point for continued growth and expansion of the City. LRT is seen by many as a way to improve access to and from downtown Edmonton and to therefore increase business and facility use. There is a desire for enhanced pedestrian and cyclist facilities and connections to major destination points.

However, the removal of vehicle capacity and decreased access to adjacent parkades along the corridor has been identified as a concern. The balance between maintaining vehicle access and enhancing pedestrian and cyclist facilities with LRT is a competing theme.



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Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

There were also competing interests relative to station location with some suggesting that recommended station locations need to be closer to individual origin or destination locations to be of optimal benefit. Others noted concerns about safety, security and access impacts with stations located too close to their buildings.

Another segment of the population has raised concerns about pedestrian and cycling circulation along the corridor. Many indicated support for a balanced approach that saw enhancements for cyclists and the addition of continuous bike lanes in places along the corridor

Another concern is the approved corridor itself, especially for stakeholders in the Quarters area. They are concerned about the impact to their community from the LRT, portal and tunnel especially in regards to access.

107 Stop

- The desire to serve both MacEwan and NorQuest has been identified in this area, with some noting a need for closer connections to both of the institutions with potentially adding another stop to serve NorQuest, while others preferred the recommended location because it serves both institutions. This stop was previously suggested to be on a diagonal (on the block between 104 and 103 Avenues) and feedback from stakeholders indicated that they were pleased about the change because the AADAC building is not impacted. As well, this option allows for potential redevelopment in the area. Concerns were expressed about the loss of a southbound traffic lane between 104 and 103 Avenues.

105/106 Street Stop

- The desire to serve NorQuest with a stop directly adjacent to the campus was raised, as well as potential impacts to the 104 Street Market. In discussion with the 104 Street Market, there were questions about the impact to the operation today but also interest and excitement about the addition of LRT. Future discussions will be needed to identify impacts that may arise from construction and operation on the market.

Centre West Stop

- Options considered to remove or reduce vehicle access to 102 Avenue were positively viewed and promoted by some who wanted to see a more pedestrian-oriented environment, while others noted a concern about vehicle access to parkades and businesses along the corridor. It is noted that 102 Avenue is already a key bus transit corridor, and there is a desire to ensure that people served by transit along this corridor continue to be served in the future. Concerns have been raised about security in and around transit locations in this area. A need to ensure security concerns are addressed for the LRT stops and the adjacent areas in the future has also been raised.



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Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

Churchill Stop

- In the draft plan, 102 Avenue was closed to traffic. The recommended plan continues the eastbound lane along 102 Avenue into the Quarters. There was a mixture of responses as some felt the closure was a good idea in promoting a more pedestrian environment while others are pleased with the eastbound lane (as shown in the recommended plan) as it provides for vehicle access and circulation in the area. The need to ensure the LRT does not impact the acoustics at the Winspear Centre and the Citadel Theater and parking access is maintained were raised and both are reflected in the recommended plan. Security measures at the station and in the area will need to be considered on an ongoing basis.

Quarters

- The need for this station to serve and contribute to planned development in the Quarters was raised. Some desired the stop be moved closer to 95 Street and Jasper Avenue to serve the planned higher density area. Future construction staging activities have been identified as concerns that will need to be discussed with residents in the area. Strong opinions were voiced from representatives from the Boyle Street community, the Chinese Benevolent Society and other Chinatown organizations and individuals and the Riverdale community. They are not supportive of the chosen corridor and would prefer that the portal and tunnel be located elsewhere.

Review Options: September/October 2010

- Participants were very positive about the potential for expanding LRT and saw benefits to the community, businesses and institutions. There is a great deal of interest in seeing downtown as a connection point for all LRT lines within the city.
- There was interest and support for options that increased pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the LRT and within the downtown as a whole.
- The importance of ensuring safe and secure LRT stops was also raised. As the LRT planning process moves forward, there is a need to provide safety and security features at stops and in the adjacent areas.
- There is a desire to preserve vehicle access to Jasper Avenue and to parkades along the corridor. Participants noted concerns about specific pedestrian and shipping access impacts when reviewing the alignment options.
- A mixture of views was heard on the potential to decrease capacity or close sections of 102 Avenue to vehicle traffic. Some participants noted a great potential to transform the area as a transit and pedestrian-focused area. Others noted concerns about the impacts this would have on vehicle access to key commercial properties in the area.
- Stakeholders noted the identified stop locations were connected with the right destinations and activity centres. However, throughout the process, a need to balance the different interests to determine the best stop locations was reinforced.



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Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

- With the potential development of a new arena district in the downtown, it was reinforced that planning for LRT needs to consider the possible impacts.

Open House Feedback – November 2, 2010

- A total of 148 people attended the open house for the Downtown LRT Connector on November 2, 2010. Of those, approximately 50 completed questionnaires.
- Almost half of the respondents (47%) who completed the open house survey indicated they were satisfied with the draft LRT Concept Plan, with 27% indicating they were neutral, and 26% indicating they were dissatisfied.
- Participants who were satisfied with the draft Concept Plan most frequently stated it was a good plan that was well balanced to consider the needs of many stakeholders, that the plan needs to move forward, and they see benefits from reducing road capacity and enhancing pedestrian focus. Those who indicated dissatisfaction were most concerned about the impact of reduced roadway capacity on cars and traffic congestion, and they noted concerns regarding station locations and bus transit integration.
- Participants primarily indicated support for the recommended alignment, as many noted the alignment improved opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists in the downtown, and they noted a balance has been struck between private vehicle traffic and public transit. However, others indicated concerns that the plan has too much of an impact on vehicle traffic in the downtown.
- Participants indicated support for the station locations, as means to connect to major destinations, and integrate with other transit modes such as the existing LRT lines. It has been noted by some that the plan is balanced and serves the major corridors. However, a segment has expressed concerns that the 107 Street Station needs to be more closely spaced to Grant MacEwan University, and that NorQuest should have a more directly connected station. Some participants also noted a desire for the Quarters station to be more optimally located near Jasper Avenue and 95 Street towards the planned higher density area and that the portal and tunnel be relocated.



Downtown LRT Connector

Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

Summary of Process and Key Themes – Third Stage Consultations - January 1- April 28, 2011

Common Themes

The feedback received on the draft plan presented in December 2010 identified that there were elements of the plan such as the stop in the Quarters area, 107 Street stop option and traffic circulation along 102 Avenue that needed further review. The recommended concept plan was refined considering the concerns noted above.

There are still concerns specifically relating to the alignment, station location and portal location of the recommended concept plan in the Quarters Area. The recommended station location is not preferred by community members as it is perceived to impact access to buildings for the Chinese community and the residents of Riverdale would prefer a stop closer to their community. The issues raised regarding station location, access impacts, and portal location are issues that can be attributed to the corridor approved rather than the details in the recommended concept plan. Key stakeholders throughout this eastern section of the recommended concept plan have suggested on numerous occasions that the station should be located underground and that the alignment should be below grade further west, starting just east of 99 Street.

The 107 Street stop location was discussed with representatives of both NorQuest College and MacEwan University. Both institutions identified a preference for alternative station locations in this area which were reviewed by the project team. Further discussions with both are planned for the Preliminary Engineering Design phase of the project.

Individual Meetings with Key Stakeholder Groups and Institutions

The first component of the third stage of the public involvement process was a series of individual meetings with key stakeholders, and three consultations with larger groups.

Generally all stakeholders that the project team met with were supportive of the principle of providing the Downtown LRT as it will provide additional access to Edmonton's downtown and will support growth and increased vitality of Edmonton's downtown core.

The majority of the issues and concerns that individual stakeholders had were local issues. Many expressed support for the changes that had been made to the concept plan. However, concern still remains about some specific access/egress issues and decreased traffic capacity along 102 Avenue for cars and trucks.



Downtown LRT Connector

Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

In all cases the project team recorded all concerns and issues and committed to continue to assess these more detailed issues as part of the Preliminary Engineering Design phase of the project.

Two separate meetings were held with members of the public representing the Chinese community and the communities of Riverdale and Boyle-McCauley. These meetings were organized to continue engagement after initial meetings in late 2010. The concerns identified in late 2010 remain with these groups – station location and having the station at grade rather than underground, access to street-side buildings, disruption of access on 102 Avenue and noise and safety concerns for Chinese seniors' groups using the facilities in the area. The participants and representatives of these groups through the additional meetings have a better appreciation of the constraints and rationale for the configuration of the recommended concept plan. Many of the concerns can be attributed to the selection of the LRT corridor on 102 Avenue approved in 2010.

Information Session Feedback – April 28, 2011

- A total of 132 people attended the information session for the Downtown LRT Connector on April 28, 2011. Of those, approximately 20 completed questionnaires.
- 72% of those that submitted questionnaires strongly agreed or agreed that the information presented was useful and informative, 68% felt the information was easy to understand and 52% agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to find satisfactory answers to their questions.
- 25% of the respondents who completed the open house survey indicated they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the draft LRT Concept Plan, with 33% indicating they were neutral, and 33% indicating they were dissatisfied.
- 13 people completed the question that asked, “*Do you have any comments on the project and/or the public involvement process?*” There were three comments relating to the 107 Street station and the LRT impacts for both NorQuest College and MacEwan University, all in support of continued discussions with both institutions. There were three comments related positively to the focus on pedestrian and cyclist concepts. Four comments dealt with alternate ideas for the downtown corridor and other legs of the overall LRT network.
- Feedback was also collected at the Information Session by providing an opportunity for participants to attach notes to the maps/drawings of the Recommended Concept Plan displayed throughout the evening.
- 61 comments in total were received, with 9 commenting on the overall plan, and approximately 10-12 comments about each station location.

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Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

Detailed list of public involvement activities August 2010 to May 2011

Date	Activity
Aug 16, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Downtown Business Association (Jim Taylor)
Sept 1, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with Citadel Theatre (3 attendees)
Sept 2, 2010	<p>Downtown LRT Breakfast meeting (35 attendees)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-sponsored by Downtown Business Association and City of Edmonton 54 stakeholder groups invited, representing community, commercial/business, active transportation, transit, and institutions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with Edmonton Public Library (2 attendees)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with NorQuest College (3 attendees)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with Katz Group (1 attendee)
Sept 3, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with the Winspear Centre (1 attendee)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with Manulife Centre (2 attendees)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with YMCA (1 attendee)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with City Centre Mall (1 attendee)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with Canada Place
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with MacEwan University (2 attendees)
Sept 23, 2010	<p>Building Owners and Managers Association – BOMA (80 participants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation and questionnaire presented at BOMA lunch
	<p>Meeting with NorQuest College</p>
Sept 27, 2010	<p>Alberta Health Services (1 attendee)</p>
Sept 28, 2010	<p>Meeting with Fire Rescue</p>
Oct 4, 2010	<p>Meeting with the Quarters Project</p>
October 7, 2010	<p>Meeting with NorQuest College (2 attendees)</p>
	<p>Downtown Edmonton Community League</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special General Meeting on LRT Presented LRT options
Oct 14, 2010	<p>Meeting with NorQuest College</p>
Oct 25, 2010	<p>104 Street Market – Board of Directors</p>
Nov 2, 2010	<p>Open House- Stanley Milner Library (148 participants)</p>
Dec 7, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Chinese Benevolent Association
March 21, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trails, Paths and Routes Advisory Committee (6 attendees)
March 24, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with MacEwan University (2 attendees)
March 24, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with YMCA (4 attendees)
March 24, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with NorQuest College (2 attendees)



Downtown LRT Connector

Public Involvement Report 2011

www.edmonton.ca/LRTProjects

May 2011

March 24, 2011	• Meeting with Katz Group (2 attendees)
March 25, 2011	• Meeting with Downtown Business Association (Jim Taylor)
March 25, 2011	• Meeting with Winspear Center (2 attendees)
April 4, 2011	• Meeting with representatives of Chinese community and Riverdale and Boyle-McCauley neighbourhoods (11)
April 8, 2011	• Meeting with Citadel Theatre (2)
April 11, 2011	• Meeting with Edmonton Public Library (3 attendees)
April 14, 2011	• Meeting with representatives of Chinese community and Riverdale and Boyle-McCauley neighbourhood (follow-up to April 4 meeting) (11)
April 19, 2011	• Meeting with Building Owners and Managers Association (Board of Directors) (10)
April 19, 2011	• Telephone conference call with Alberta Health Services (Kathleen McCabe) (2)
April 21, 2011	• Meeting with City of Edmonton Civic Events Office (2 attendees)
April 28, 2011	• Public Information Session at City Hall (132 participants)

Total: 38 events (August 2010 to April 30, 2011) Approximately 482 participants