



**FORT ROAD BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION**

ANNUAL REPORT

2019



The Fort Road Business Improvement Area was established in 1991 as the Fort Road Business and Community Association for the purpose of providing a means for that community to revitalize itself in the face of changes in the economic base of the area.

Fort Road was one of several roads such as Stony Plain Road, St Albert Trail, etc that linked Edmonton to its surrounding communities in the early years of Edmonton's development. Fort Road for example was a link to the northeast and the Fort Saskatchewan area. Over time commercial, industrial and residential followed these roads. Each area developed their own unique character depending on their economic base. Fort Road became the base for Edmonton's meat packing businesses which was a major part of Edmonton's economy.

However in the 1980's the meat packing industry began to change rendering their existing facilities and locations obsolete. The sole reminder of this heritage along Fort Road is the chimney of the Canada Packers plant. The chimney has been preserved and restored and will soon be a significant visitor attraction on Fort Road. The Fort Road business association was also formed to address revitalization of the area,

One of the most significant needs was to address the upgrading of the roadway itself which at that time was only two lanes without curbs, Also over time two major roadways, Manning Freeway and what is now Wayne Gretzky Drive were built feeding traffic onto Fort Road. The consequence was that the core of Fort Road between Yellowhead Trail and 137 Avenue needed to be reconstructed to accommodate traffic.

In the early 2000's Fort Road went through a significant change. To accommodate the new road, most of the businesses on the south side of Fort Road needed to be removed. Most of these businesses were the core of what was Fort Road Old Town. However most of the buildings were at the end their economic and physical life. The roadway area reconstruction was therefore both a loss and an opportunity. The City and the Community worked together to seize the opportunity to redevelop the area on the south side of Fort Road between 66 Street and the Belvedere LRT station. The concept for the area was to take advantage of the proximity of the LRT by creating a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) called the Station Pointe Lands.



The Station Pointe Lands development project has been an important focus for the Association for a long period of time. The City acquired the lands by purchasing a significant number of small businesses with the intent that the surplus properties would become a model for Transit Oriented Development which would offer residential and retail uses as a catalyst for enhancing the economic viability of the Fort Road business community as well as the surrounding area to the west of Fort Road. The Association has been a principal in driving the design and enhancements to this area to create a unique setting that is pedestrian friendly and that has features to define the

history of the Fort Road area and its role in Edmonton's development. The northeast has some valuable attributes. It has excellent transportation access both by road, such as the Yellowhead Trail, and by transit, such as the LRT. However, in spite of these attributes the site has not kept up with other areas of the city. The Station Pointe Lands offered an opportunity to break the perception of the area by introducing a site for more upscale development.

Status of Station Pointe Lands

The first new development project is now under construction with completion anticipated in 2019. The project is a mixed use with apartments and ground floor commercial fronting on Fort Road. The development should help add street activities to the east side of Fort Road.

The historical features that are intended to add interest have been completed but are still awaiting more development of adjacent lots before being installed. One monument sponsored by the Together 2000 Seniors Group has been placed in the East Plaza after a long delay.

The overall development of Station Pointe Lands has not progressed as fast as both the City and the adjacent communities hoped when the original plan was conceived over ten years ago. Both the Fort Road Business improvement area have initiated plans to address new approaches to the marketing and potential new uses for the lands. While the initial plan was highly praised, it was also a bold vision that may not be possible given projected changes in the real estate market. The Fort Road BIA has initiated the development of a marketing plan to identify and target new uses that may differ from the current zoning plan but would enhance business activity in the area. Both the Fort Road BIA and the adjacent communities are concerned that because of slow progress in marketing the lands that alternatives that the community does not support will be pursued. It is anticipated that future of the Station Pointe Lands will be a major subject of discussion in 2019.

BUSINESS DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

The Fort Road BIA continues to pursue activities that enhance the business viability of the area. One of the major areas of activity is to enhance the physical appearance of the area. One initiative has been to concentrate on the appearance of vacant properties by working with the City enforcement officers to find solutions to problem properties and deal with the potential negative activity that can affect the perception of the area and deter new investment. The Association works closely with the Edmonton Police Service, Bylaw Enforcement and Maintenance Departments to keep the area as clean as possible and to deter unintended uses from becoming established.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Fort Road BIA continues to work with and support the Belvedere Community League in their initiatives. The two organizations have partnered with the Annual Clean-up and Graffiti since 2001. The Fort Road BIA is also participating in the Baldwin Belvedere Revitalization Project lead by the City of Edmonton.

NEW DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Fort Road BIA is anticipating new opportunities that may arise from the construction completion of the new Northeast Transit Garage. This development should bring more workers into the area.



The Fort Road Historical Foundation continues to look forward to the development of the interpretive centre planned for the Canada Packers chimney that is part of the Transit Garage site development.



Business development in the area continues to evolve. The development of Plaza 66 at the corner of 66 Street continues to be successful. The Canadian Tire Store location that closed in 2017 has been repurposed as a car dealership.

Respectfully submitted by

Deanna Fuhlendorf
Executive Director
Fort Road Business Association