

Options to Implement Wayfinding

Recommendation

That the May 21, 2019, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_6901, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 12, 2019, Urban Planning Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to Committee on options to implement the wayfinding recommendations as outlined in the February 12, 2019, Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board report CR_6856.

Executive Summary

Well-designed wayfinding supports Edmontonians and visitors as they explore, experience and connect to the community. The Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board (ETSAB) provided Administration with recommendations on improving wayfinding in Edmonton, focusing on consistency and Universal Design practices.

Wayfinding refers to a broad toolset of signage, maps and digital applications. It connects people to mobility options, recreational opportunities and unique places in the city. The scope of wayfinding is wide, ranging from signs on washroom facilities to the map system that helps people understand and discover the city.

Several actions that address Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board recommendations are currently underway, or will be completed in the near future. Short term actions include addressing concerns in and around Churchill LRT Station, installing permanent pedestrian wayfinding downtown, testing digital signage and developing a Transit Facility Design Guide, which will establish a common approach to accessibility and wayfinding at transit facilities.

The City actively promotes and implements Universal Design practices. An updated accessibility policy, *Accessibility for People with Disabilities* C602, will be presented to City Council in fall 2019. The City's *Access Design Guide* will also be updated in 2019 to reflect new policy direction.

Report

The [February 12, 2019 Urban Planning Committee report CR_6856 ETSAB Wayfinding](#), presented by Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board outlined recommendations related to wayfinding to ensure it is well designed to meet the needs of all users.

Wayfinding refers to signage, maps and digital applications that help people develop a sense of belonging while navigating from place to place. The scope of wayfinding is wide, ranging from signs on washroom facilities to the map system that helps people move about the city on multi-modal journeys. Wayfinding can incorporate elements that are child friendly, integrate public art or acknowledge our history. Effective wayfinding enhances the experience of citizens and visitors.

Themes of the recommendations presented in report CR_6856 are:

1. Adopt a consistent approach in signage, mapping and symbols city wide;
2. Ensure accurate, up to date maps and signage;
3. Ensure that persons with disabilities are provided well designed wayfinding information that meets their needs on all stages of their journeys;
4. Provide digital signage to provide more information at key hubs;
5. Provide wayfinding “journey from here” information at transit facilities, bus stops and on transit vehicles.

Administration’s approach to each of these themes is outlined below:

1. Building a Consistent Approach

Historically, City business areas have independently developed signage standards. Updating signage to current standards has typically been incremental, often associated with asset renewal. The result is inconsistent signage for wayfinding for City assets. There is no wayfinding standard for roadway attraction signage, cycling infrastructure, and district level parks.

An integrated wayfinding standard focused on walking has been developed. It lays the groundwork for best practices, and forms the basis for an integrated wayfinding system as outlined in [Attachment #1](#). It presents a range of wayfinding tools including maps, signage, and digital applications that will help to address some of the Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board report recommendations.

2. Accurate and Up-to-Date Maps and Signage

Updates are primarily done as part of new or retrofit capital funded open space or facility projects as there are limited budgets to maintain existing signage systems. However, recently, a background digital map based system was developed to support wayfinding in the city. This system enables the production of a range of maps for

paper products, signage and digital outputs from a single source. This will be more efficient, accurate and cost effective.

3. Universal Design

Universal Design is design that meets the needs of all people. From a wayfinding perspective that often means using a variety of wayfinding tools to meet different needs and preferences. The *Access Design Guide* was developed in 2017. It includes guidance on wayfinding which was developed in partnership with stakeholders and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The guide will be updated in 2019.

City Policies that relate to accessibility are being updated and combined into a new policy, *Accessibility for People with Disabilities*, that will be presented to Council in Fall 2019. Any future sign or wayfinding standards would need to align with this new policy.

Administration recognizes that the wayfinding needs of people with disabilities change over time; therefore, continued work will be required to keep up with changing needs and technologies.

4. Providing Digital Signage

Digital signage systems have the advantage of being readily updatable. However, they have higher upfront capital costs and require ongoing operating budget to support maintenance. There is a range of digital signage, from static displays to fully interactive signage. Fully interactive outdoor signs appropriate to weather extremes are still emerging technology.

Static digital wayfinding information will be provided along the Valley Line LRT. Administration is evaluating potential locations and timing to test interactive digital signs for suitability in Edmonton's climate.

5. Provide wayfinding “journey from here” information at transit facilities, and on transit vehicles.

Expansion of signage systems at existing transit facilities and other areas, as recommended by the Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board, is not currently funded, but could be implemented as part of new or retrofit capital projects.

The pedestrian wayfinding system is now a City standard that is included in the scope of new streetscaping projects, however there are no resources allocated to expand the signage to other pedestrian areas or transit facilities.

Wayfinding Actions

Several actions that address Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board recommendations are currently underway or will be completed in the near future.

[Attachment 2](#) provides a summary of these actions and other options that could be considered.

Summary of Short Term Actions / Options

This year will see significant improvements in wayfinding:

- the installation of permanent signs for the pedestrian wayfinding system and an overhaul of the existing pedway signage downtown;
- installations of digital signage will be tested in select locations and a web-based map system will be available on the City's website;
- Edmonton Transit will be addressing the majority of the signage concerns in and around Churchill Station; and
- new wayfinding signage will be installed in the river valley in locations where renewal is taking place.

In addition to wayfinding improvements, the *Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy C602* will be updated.

Summary of Medium Term Actions / Options

The following wayfinding improvements are planned for 2020:

- Bus Network Redesign project will include updating bus stop signage and providing more customer friendly transit maps;
- opening of the Valley Line Southeast and the resulting changes at Churchill Station will significantly improve accessible connections; and
- Edmonton Transit will continue to audit transit centres and LRT stations to identify required improvements.

Options to further address the Edmonton Transit Advisory Board recommendations could include:

- further expansion of wayfinding on some pedestrian main streets, transit facilities and river valley locations;
- addressing gaps in design standards; and
- advancing the development of digital systems.

Summary of Long Term Actions / Options

Implementation of a *Transit Facility Design Guide* will further drive improvements and establish a common approach for accessibility and customer wayfinding on transit property. Administration will develop a design framework based on existing City of Edmonton standards and draw from best practices for transit facility planning, design, construction and operation.

Options for improvements could include further expansion of wayfinding to existing transit facilities and bus shelters, as well as more use of digital signage.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure	Edmontonians' Assessment: Access to infrastructure, amenities and services that improve quality of life (% that agree/strongly agree)	68% (2017)	70% (2018)
Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play.	Edmontonians' Assessment: Connected to Community (% of survey respondents who feel connected)	47% (2017)	45% (2017 target)

Attachments

1. Integrated Wayfinding Systems
2. Actions and Options to Implement Wayfinding

Others Reviewing this Report.

- R. Kits, Acting Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- G. Cebryk, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor