

# WALTERDALE BRIDGE FAQ

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## 1. Why does the Walterdale Bridge have to be replaced?

The existing Walterdale Bridge was constructed in 1912 to 1913 and is approaching the end of its practical service life. Following bridge condition assessments completed in 2000, some rehabilitation of the existing bridge was undertaken to extend the life of the existing bridge to 2015. Major rehabilitation would be required to extend the service life beyond that date.

## 2. Why does the bridge have to be constructed in the chosen location?

Several options for the location of the replacement bridge were considered during the Concept Planning

Study. The planned location of the bridge to the east of the existing bridge was selected on the basis of:

- allowing the existing Walterdale Bridge and approach roadways to continue to operate during the construction of the replacement bridge.
- minimizing impact on the environment/river valley
- minimizing impact on historical and cultural resources on both sides of the river.
- allowing any future re-alignment designs of Queen Elizabeth Park Road/Saskatchewan Drive to be accommodated.

### **3. How will the bridge impact my access to the trails that I use all the time on both sides of the river?**

The bridge project will maintain the existing trail system as well as provide some improvements. The new bridge will be designed to accommodate possible future improvements to Queen Elizabeth Park and the repurposing of the former EPCOR Generating Station. Improvements to the existing trail system include a new trail that will pass beneath the north side of the new bridge. Enhanced trail and walkways on the new bridge will complement the area system. Efforts will also be made to keep the trail links open during construction of the new bridge and the realigned roadways.

### **4. Will the new bridge ease the congestion of Walterdale Hill Road and Queen Elizabeth Park Road during morning rush hour?**

The existing two-lane bridge will be replaced with a three-lane bridge. The additional lane on the bridge and Queen Elizabeth Park Road will reduce traffic delays and improve operation and safety at the river crossing.

### **5. How will the new bridge impact getting in and out of the Kinsmen Sports Centre?**

Construction will not significantly impact access to the Kinsmen Sports Centre. After construction completion, the current access pattern of one inbound roadway and a separate outbound roadway will be replaced with a similar pattern that will be safer and more operationally effective.

### **6. How are you planning to minimize the impact of the new bridge, both during and after construction, on the historical areas around the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground?**

The project team has been working closely with City's Aboriginal Relations Office, the Alberta Ministry of Culture and Community Services, and

others to work through the issues and potential impacts of the project, particularly on the north side of the River. The consultant team includes a specialized historical resource consultant to facilitate this aspect of the project. An amendment to the legal cemetery boundary has been requested. The existing interpretive belvedere will be relocated as part of the project work, but the Memory Circle, Reinterment Area, and the Historic Period Cemetery compound will be preserved.

### **7. Why must the belvedere that contains the interpretive panels that tell the history of the area be moved?**

The footprint of the reconfigured roadway plan will impact the site of the belvedere within the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground. Aboriginal communities are currently engaged and will continue to assist in determining both interim and final locations for the relocated belvedere.

### **8. I heard that there are a lot of pipes and ducts on the old bridge for carrying water, power and telephone services across the river? What are you going to do with them?**

The project team is currently working with all the utility companies to come up with a mutually agreeable plan to address their specific utility needs including possible relocation onto the new bridge, as well as assessing alternate locations if necessary.

### **9. How has the general public been consulted with?**

An ongoing public involvement process is underway and will continue throughout the project.

For detailed information on the public involvement plan, please see the project website, [www.edmonton.ca/walterdalebridge](http://www.edmonton.ca/walterdalebridge)

Public involvement for the concept plan included two public open houses (on November 18, 2010 and March 22, 2011, respectively). Public involvement for the preliminary engineering phase began during fall 2011 with a series of stakeholder group

meetings. A stakeholder input panel was also established to help inform and prepare the project team for broader public involvement, culminating with the open house on February 8, 2012. A public information session will be held near the completion of the detailed design phase in Winter 2012/2013.

Specifically, individual meetings are being or have been held with representatives of the local communities and numerous other key stakeholder groups to seek their comment and input on various components of the project.

## **10. How has the Aboriginal community been consulted for this project?**

The project team has been working closely with the City's Aboriginal Relations Office. Aboriginal consultation requirements toward Historic Resources Act clearance are set out by Alberta Culture and Community Services. Presently we are consulting with 21 Aboriginal communities throughout Alberta. Local Aboriginal communities consulted include Enoch First Nation, Papaschase and Michel Bands and the Métis Nation of Alberta. The project team has also gathered with Elders from local First Nations and Métis communities during the concept phase for their guidance on respectful approaches to the project. The stakeholder input panel assembled for the project design and construction phase has representation from the First Nations. Additionally, there are open house events for the general public that members of the urban Aboriginal community in Edmonton may attend and provide input on the project.

## **11. What will happen to the existing bridge?**

The existing bridge will be removed as part of the bridge replacement. Options will be reviewed to identify possible uses for the existing bridge, including possible reuse/repurposing of the bridge at another site.

## **12. How long will it take to construct the new bridge?**

The new bridge will be under construction from early 2013 until 2015. The date that the bridge will open to traffic is dependent on environmental restrictions related to temporary works in the river (currently being defined), possible adverse weather conditions affecting construction progress, and the performance of the successful bridge contractor. Removal of the existing bridge will occur after the new bridge is open to traffic, and is also subject to the river environmental restrictions. It is anticipated that the existing bridge will be removed in late 2015 or early 2016.

## **13. Will traffic be able to cross the river on the existing bridge while the new bridge is being constructed?**

Yes. Every effort is being made and considered in the design of the replacement bridge to keep traffic flowing along the existing bridge. However, some short-term traffic disruptions and detours are anticipated in the final stages of construction. It is anticipated the Queen Elizabeth Park Road will be closed to traffic for two to three months to allow the realigned roadway to be constructed. The City will communicate these disruptions well in advance.

## **14. Why not widen the bridge to four lanes?**

The City's Transportation Master Plan, "The Way We Move" calls for shifting transportation modes to increased public transit access and service levels and to more active transportation modes such as walking and cycling. Additional bridge width to accommodate more traffic lanes comes at a premium. Instead of adding a fourth traffic lane and widening the bridge for vehicular traffic, enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities will be

provided on the new bridge via a multi-use trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other. Adding a fourth lane to the Walterdale Bridge and adding additional capacity to the river crossing does not align with the goals outlined in the City of Edmonton's Transportation Master Plan "The Way We Move". Adding a fourth lane on the bridge will not resolve the bottlenecks along this commuter corridor that currently exist at 82 Avenue and 97 Avenue.

## 15. Why will there be traffic lights on both sides of the new bridge?

A signalized intersection will control traffic flow at the intersection of Walterdale Hill Road and Queen Elizabeth Park Road. The existing traffic signals at the intersection of 105 Street/River Valley Road/Rossdale Road will remain.

## 16. Why won't there be southbound lanes on the bridge?

In accordance with the City's Transportation Master Plan, "The Way We Move", vehicular traffic capacity is not to be increased within the inner City. Adding a southbound lane to serve the Kinsmen Sports Centre would have a limited benefit for a large incremental cost.

## 17. Where exactly will you be doing work on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River?

The west edge of the new bridge will abut to the east edge of the existing Walterdale bridge. The new bridge will cross the River at an angle, more closely aligning with 105 Street to the north. The new roadwork at the north end of the new bridge will tie into existing 105 Street south of River Valley Road/Rossdale Road, without disturbance to the Historic Period Cemetery compound, the existing Memory Circle, and the Reinterment Area.

## 18. Will there be art on the bridge?

Yes. The project team is working with an artist hired by the Edmonton Arts Council to provide a public art component for the Walterdale Bridge Replacement project. The artist, Ken Lum, is providing input to the design team on various aspects of the aesthetics of the signature bridge, as well as two pieces of public art for the north and south river bank areas. The Edmonton Arts Council will be reviewing the artist's proposed works in the upcoming months in advance of the tendering of the Walterdale Bridge Replacement project.