

# WALTERDALE REPLACEMENT BRIDGE FAQ

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The City of Edmonton began construction on the new Walterdale Bridge in 2013. The new bridge is scheduled for completion in 2016. Construction details and updates will be available on the project website, [edmonton.ca/WalterdaleBridge](http://edmonton.ca/WalterdaleBridge).

## Why must the Walterdale Bridge be replaced?

The existing Walterdale Bridge was constructed between 1912-13 and is approaching the end of its service life. The bridge was assessed in 2000 and rehabilitated to extend its service life to 2015. Major rehabilitation would be required to extend the bridge's service life beyond 2015. City Council decided to replace the bridge instead.

- allow connecting roadways to operate during construction;
- minimize impacts to the local environment/River Valley;
- minimize impacts to local historical and cultural resources; and
- accommodate any future realignments of Queen Elizabeth Park Road/Saskatchewan Drive.

## Why does the bridge need to be constructed in the chosen location?

Several options for the new bridge location were considered during the concept planning phase. The decision to locate the new bridge several metres east of the existing bridge was made to:

## How will bridge construction impact access to river valley trails?

The area around the existing Walterdale Bridge will be affected by construction activities for the new bridge, including trail closures and detours. Portions of Queen Elizabeth Park, Kinsmen Park and the area around the EPCOR generation station will be affected. To ensure public safety, please stay

away from the closed areas during construction.

The trails will be closed for the duration of construction. A detour map is available on the project webpage. The new bridge will be designed to accommodate possible future improvements to Queen Elizabeth Park and the repurposing of the former EPCOR Power substation.

Improvements to the existing trail system include a new trail that will pass below the north side of the new bridge. Walkways on the new bridge will complement the overall trail system.

### Why do the trails have to be closed for such a long time?

The current trail detour plan was developed in consultation with the Community Services department as a result of the impacts of the beginning of the construction for the replacement of the Walterdale Bridge. The Walterdale Bridge project team has implemented the detour and closure plan in accordance with the procedures established by Community Services for any trail closure.

The major construction work on the bridge started in July 2013 and requires trail closures for the duration of the project (until 2017, when the old bridge is dismantled).

Due to the nature of the work taking place along the north river bank for both the EPCOR decommissioning and the Walterdale Bridge Replacement project, it is not possible to provide safe access to the public along the existing trails, and as such detours have been put in place to provide safe and efficient access around the construction area.

### 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. Additional lanes on the new bridge and on approach roadways immediately south of the bridge will reduce traffic delays and improve safety.

### How will the new bridge change access to the Kinsmen Sports Centre?

Construction will not significantly change access to the Kinsmen Sports Centre. When construction is completed in 2015, the current access pattern of one inbound roadway and a separate outbound roadway will be replaced with a similar pattern that improves safety and traffic flow.

### How will construction and operation of the new bridge impact the historical areas around the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground?

The project team has worked closely with First Nations and Métis communities, the City's Aboriginal Relations Office, Alberta Culture and others to understand potential historic and cultural issues related to the project on both sides of the river. The consultant team included a specialized historical resource consultant to facilitate this aspect of the project.

An extensive pre-construction Historical Resources Impact Assessment was carried out between October 2011 and October 2012. Construction includes ongoing archaeological monitoring and paleontological inspections. An amendment to the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground legal boundary was requested. The existing interpretive belvedere will be relocated as part of the project work, but the memory circle, re-interment area and historic period graveyard will remain undisturbed.

### Why is the City planning to relocate the interpretive belvedere and information panels that tell the history of the area?

Design for the road connection (105 Street) on the north side of the new bridge requires the relocation of the interpretive belvedere. During the concept planning phase, the project team evaluated many options and determined that relocating the interpretive belvedere and panels poses the lowest level of additional impact that building a new Walterdale Bridge could possibly create.

The interpretive belvedere was constructed on a site that has already been disturbed many times over the last 150 years as Edmonton grew from a trading post into a major city. Disturbing the same area again should not impact any intact historic or cultural resources. First Nations and Métis communities have been engaged with the process and will continue to assist in determining interim and final locations for the interpretive belvedere and information panels.

### What's going to happen with the various utilities—water pipes, power ducts, telephone wires, etc.—that use the existing bridge to cross the river?

The project team is working with utility companies to come up with a mutually agreeable plan to address their specific needs. Possibilities include relocating utilities onto the new bridge and assessing alternate locations if necessary.

## What is the construction schedule for the new bridge?

Preliminary construction began in January 2013 and included building access roads to the river and portions of the river berms. The main construction contract began in the summer of 2013. It consists of construction of the new bridge and corresponding roadway connections. The new Walterdale Bridge is scheduled to open in 2016, with the dismantling of the old bridge happening in 2017. Weather or other factors during construction could delay the bridge's opening day.

## How has the general public been involved with Walterdale Bridge decisions?

A public involvement process began in 2010.

Public involvement for the concept plan included two public open houses (November 18, 2010 and March 22, 2011). Public involvement for the preliminary engineering phase began in 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 an open house on February 8, 2012. A final public information session was held on February 7, 2013, prior to when the main construction contract began.

## How have First Nations and Métis communities been consulted?

The project has worked closely with the City's Aboriginal Relations Office to keep First Nations and Métis communities apprised of developments. The project team has complied with direction for Aboriginal consultation requirements for *Historical Resource Act* clearance currently set out by Alberta Culture.

The project team has consulted with 21 Aboriginal communities throughout Alberta. During the concept planning phase, the project team consulted with elders from local First Nations and Métis communities for their guidance on respectful approaches to the project. First Nations and Métis representatives are included in the stakeholder input panel established for the design and build phases.

Aboriginal groups were invited to carry out a ceremony prior to construction, and are monitoring pertinent excavation and in-river construction activities for the project going forward.

## What will happen to the existing bridge?

The existing bridge will be removed in 2017, after the new bridge is open to traffic in 2016. Options for salvaging the removed bridge or portions of it are under review.

## Will traffic be able to use the existing bridge while the new bridge is being constructed?

Yes. Every effort is being made and considered in the design of the new bridge to keep one-way traffic flowing north on the existing bridge during construction. Short-term traffic disruptions and detours are anticipated during the final stages of construction. Either Walterdale Hill Road or Queen Elizabeth Park Road will always remain open to traffic during construction to allow for realignment.

Queen Elizabeth Park Road and Walterdale Hill Road were realigned in 2013 and 2014. If future road construction work is required, the City will communicate disruptions well in advance.

## 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 service and more active transportation options such as walking and cycling. Design for the new Walterdale Bridge embraces this ideal. Instead of widening the bridge for vehicle traffic and adding a fourth traffic lane, enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities will be provided on the new bridge with a multi-use trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other.

While the new bridge will add one new lane of traffic, for a total of three one-way lanes flowing south to north, adding a fourth lane does not align with *The Way We Move* and does not resolve bottlenecks along this commuter corridor that currently exist at 82 Avenue and 97 Avenue. The design of the new bridge does allow for the possibility of widening it to four lanes, which could be accomplished by removing the barrier and the sidewalk on the west side. However, other accommodations for pedestrians would have to be made to do this.

## 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 on the south side of the new bridge. The existing traffic

signals at the intersection of 105 Street/River Valley Road/Rosssdale Road will remain as they are today.

### Why won't there be southbound lanes on the bridge to access the Kinsmen Sports Centre?

The City's Transportation Master Plan, *The Way We Move*, indicates that vehicular traffic capacity is not to be increased within the inner city. Adding a southbound lane to serve the Kinsmen Sports Centre would offer limited benefits for a large incremental cost.

### Where exactly will work take place on the north side of the river?

The west edge of the new bridge will be immediately adjacent to the east edge of the existing bridge. The new bridge will cross the river at an angle, more closely aligning with 105 Street to the north. New roadworks at the north end of the new bridge will tie into the existing 105 Street south of River Valley Road/Rosssdale Road. The memory circle, re-interment area and historic period graveyard of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery and Traditional Burial Ground will not be disturbed.

### Will there be art on the bridge?

Yes. The art selection process is being managed by the Edmonton Arts Council. The project team is working with an artist commissioned by the Edmonton Arts Council to provide a public art component for the new bridge. The selected artist, Ken Lum, is providing input for various aspects of the aesthetics of the new bridge, as well as two pieces of public art for the north and south river bank areas.

### This bridge is a similar design to the Port Mann Bridge in Vancouver. Will ice and snow on the arches and cables of the new bridge be hazardous to pedestrians and motorists?

The weather conditions in Edmonton are different than those that occur in Vancouver, and we expect that icing of the cables on the new Waltherdale Bridge will be a relatively rare occurrence. Nevertheless, given the experience on the Port Mann Bridge, we are further evaluating whether cable icing is a concern with the bridge design and whether additional measures are required to protect the public from falling ice.

Sliding snow from the arch ribs might be a concern at certain times of the year. We anticipate the installation of extrusions to roughen certain areas of the tops of the arch ribs to prevent snow from sliding off, similar to those that were installed on the roof of the Edmonton Art Gallery.

