

City of Edmonton 107 Avenue Revitalization Project

What We Heard Report: 107 Avenue Revitalization Project Preliminary Design

September 2022

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Edmonton

107 Avenue Revitalization Project Overview

THE AVENUE

107 Avenue is a significant commercial roadway intersecting several communities in Edmonton. This segment of 107 Avenue is described by some within the community as, “where the world meets in Edmonton”. This is because the area is rich in character, welcoming generations of newcomers to Edmonton and providing the community with a strong multicultural influence.

The 107 Avenue Revitalization Project area extends along the avenue from 101 Street to 122 Street within Queen Mary Park (west of 109 Street) and Central McDougall (east of 109 Street).

THE PROJECT

Improvements to 107 Avenue were identified through the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program and were approved for the 2019 to 2022 budget cycle.

Based on the themes identified in the 2012 Revitalization Strategy and in consultation with a variety of community stakeholders (community mobile workshop, consultation with local businesses, open house, etc.) an [Urban Design Analysis](#) was completed in 2017.

After this consultation, the City shared its comprehensive Urban Design Analysis with Edmontonians in February 2017. This analysis focused on key initiatives that support the program's overarching goals to:

- + Develop safer communities
- + Create beautiful neighbourhoods
- + Build a dynamic economic environment
- + Connect our community



107 Avenue Aerial View

KEY INITIATIVES

The 107 Avenue Revitalization Project will design and build four key initiatives identified in the Urban Design Analysis:

- + Streetscape improvements (101 Street to 122 Street)
- + Alley projects
- + Gateway elements
- + **Public Park space** (Originally this was a 'design only element. Feedback from the community indicated that the park was essential to revitalize the avenue. It will now be included as an element to be fully constructed as part of the project.)

Renewal or reconstruction of the 107 Avenue roadway has **not** been identified in the upcoming budget cycles (10+ years). This means that the development of a full streetscape concept plan (number and width of lanes, turn bay requirements, future parking changes, bike lanes, etc.) **is not part of this project.**



Park – Full Build Out

Public Engagement

The objectives of public engagement in the Preliminary Design phase were to:

- + Seek feedback on the Preliminary Design and ensure participant perspectives from previous rounds of engagement are reflected in the design
- + Share news that the park space is now slated for full development
- + Drawing upon previous engagement feedback on the preferred Concept Plan for the park, engage stakeholders and the public on the park design to be completed as part of the project.
- + Understand the priorities of the community and what is most important to them: streetscape design, Gateway elements, alley project, and public park space.
- + Explore ways to engage newcomers, those with lower literacy, income, and connectivity levels

The City's public engagement spectrum shows four distinct levels of influence that the public can have on decisions made by the City throughout the project. The project team aims to involve community residents, stakeholders, business owners, community agencies, and visitors in decision-making to shape neighbourhood improvements.

Increasing influence of the public



ADVISE

The public and stakeholders were invited to participate at the 'Advise' level on the spectrum. In addition to ongoing public engagement, the City considers gender and other diversity characteristics in all programs and policies that affect citizens. This GBA+ (gender-based analysis) perspective can include everything from how the City conducts consultations, to neighbourhood design, to the way it delivers services.

REFINE

In 2021, a group of dedicated citizens formed to add community insight on the project. Through thoughtful discussion with the project team, the 107 Avenue Revitalization Stakeholder and City Alliance Group (SCAG) identified additional planning considerations for the community.

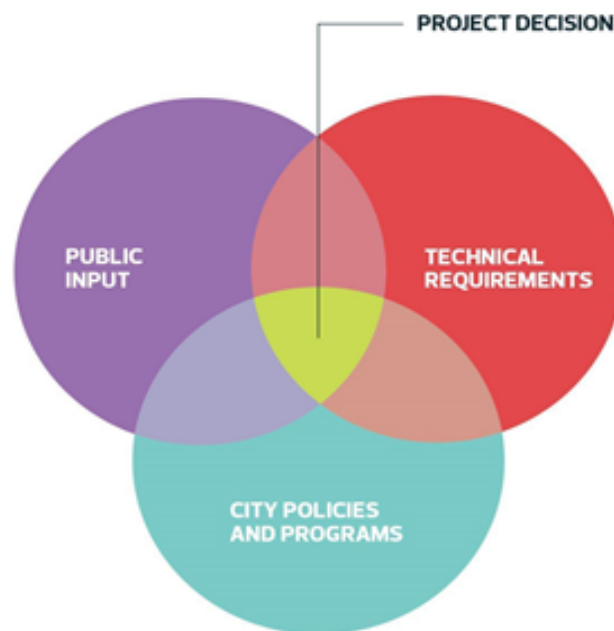
Building on the early work of the project team, the 107 Avenue Revitalization Stakeholders and City Alliance shared ideas and preferences unique to community residents and businesses in the area. In this round of engagement, SCAG members identified priorities based on their knowledge of the community.

How Decisions are Made

The City makes decisions using a combination of policy and program information, public engagement input, technical requirements and available funding. This process helps to ensure that the City's decisions are fiscally responsible, align with best practices, consider existing public and private infrastructure, land uses and neighbourhood activities, and result in the best outcomes for our city.

City policies and programs such as Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards, Vision Zero Edmonton, and Winter City Strategy provide the overall direction for urban planning designs. Each area is unique. That is why the project team asks for input from those who live, work and visit the neighbourhood. The City also considers technical aspects such as existing roadway widths and conflicts with utilities and trees to determine what will fit in the neighbourhood.

Decision-makers commit to incorporating stakeholder and public input into the Concept Plan and demonstrate how their input was used. In instances where the project team was unable to incorporate the input, decision-makers will communicate the constraints that led to the decision.



How We Engaged

Public engagement opportunities took place as a part of outdoor community events and generated a great deal of input on the preliminary design options. Small group stakeholder meetings were also done in person. These events took place between May–September 2022

ACTIVITY
Afrika Day <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Over 200 conversations, the majority from residents of the surrounding community, including the apartment buildings
Stakeholder and City Alliance Group meeting (3 meetings) <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Regular SCAG meeting+ Meeting with Central McDougall members of the Stakeholder Alliance Group unable to meet at the regular meeting+ Meeting with North Edge Business Association member and administration
Jerk Festival at Queen Mary Park Community League <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Over 40 conversations with people from the community
Central McDougall Community League
Edmonton Police Service BEAT Officers

In addition to the engagement activities, two written submissions were sent to the project team.

- + “I love it all, it’s so good”
- + “This looks way better than it does now”
- + “This is really exciting”
- + “This is fantastic”
- + “Looks good”
- + “Good work”
- + “I like it all”

How We Communicated

The project team supported community organizations in the promotion of their events. Phone calls and email were used to arrange stakeholder meetings.

What We Asked

Previous rounds of engagement provided the project team with a strong sense of the community and stakeholder viewpoints in each of the four initiatives.

All events consisted of two activities:

- + **Elements Card Sort:** A prioritization exercise featured participants determining their priorities by stacking large 'playing cards' in order of importance: Streetscape improvements, Alley projects, Gateway elements, Public Park space
- + **Park design:** Participants during the previous two rounds of engagement provided their ideas and perspectives on the Concept Designs for the park. The project team used this feedback to develop a preliminary design for the park which was shared and discussed during the engagement sessions.



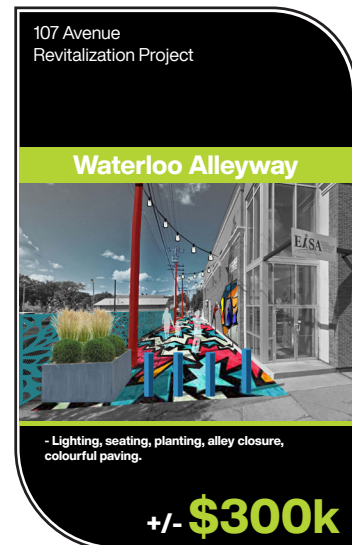
The response to the project was overwhelmingly positive. People expressed that 107 Avenue was in dire need of improvement and thought that the project elements would add vibrancy to the area.

Priorities

Participants were given 'playing cards' and asked to sort the cards according to the priority of the participants. This was done both as individual and small group exercises.

Balancing the community's needs for accessibility and useability of 107 Avenue was often at odds with those who felt the needs of vulnerable populations should be considered in equal measure. For example, 'hostile architecture' was deemed prejudicial by some, while others supported the use of amenities that encouraged sitting rather than laying down. This tension persisted throughout discussions and survey results; many of these responses related to incidents of safety, crime, and perceived increase in social disorder.

- + Streetscape 101 Street-109 Street
- + Streetscape 109 Street -117 Street
- + Streetscape 117 Street-122 Street
- + Waterloo Alley
- + Gateway Elements
- + Alley Pilot at 109 Street West
- + Park—Full buildout
- + Park—Concept design only. Not built.



The full build out of the park was consistently the first choice of participants, with alleyways the least important. While people supported the streetscape plans, they felt that the area from 117 street-122 Street, along the cemetery, was not as critical as Gateway elements.

Public	Stakeholder Groups (including SCAG)
Park-full build out	Park-full build out
Streetscape 101 Street-109 Street	Streetscape 101 Street-109 Street
Streetscape 109 Street -117 Street	Streetscape 109 Street -117 StreetW
Gateway Elements	Gateway Elements
Streetscape 117 Street-122 Street	Streetscape 117 Street-122 Street
Alleyway projects	Alleyway projects



107 Avenue Revitalization Project Awareness at the Edmonton Jerk Festival at the Queen Mary Park Community League

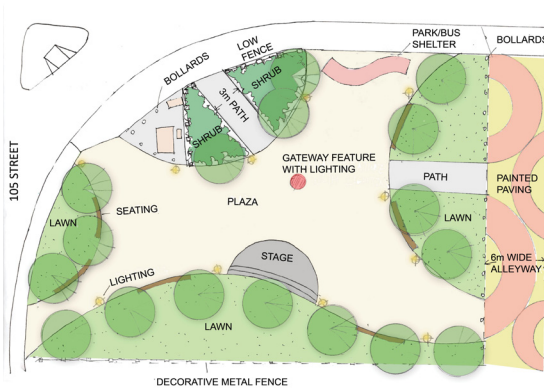
Several Central McDougal SCAG members were unable to attend the SCAG meeting and met separately with the project team. They suggested the need for a Community Hub that had been identified as part of an earlier project. They believe that a Community Hub would be transformational and would be an important feature in 'turning the community around.' While the Community Hub could not be accommodated as part of the 107 Avenue Revitalization Project, the project team agreed they would carry these ideas forward to City administration. This group's priorities differed from the public and other stakeholder groups and reflects their desire for a community hub as part of the project:

Community Hub
Park-full build out
Streetscape 101 Street-109 Street
Streetscape 109 Street -117 Street
Gateway Elements

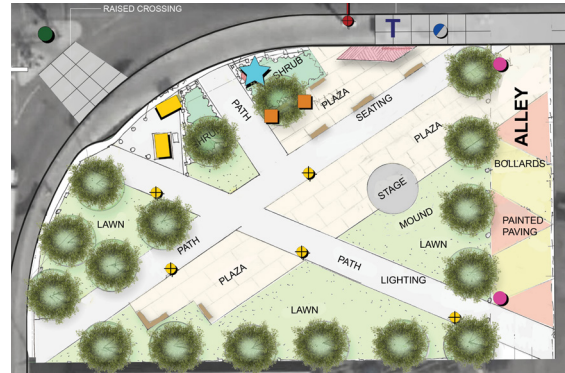
Managing safety, social disorder, visible drug use and vandalism were consistent messages throughout all conversations. Participants viewed the four initiatives through a safety lens and thought the project could enhance safety in the community.

The Park

The two rounds of engagement during the Concept Phase highlighted what people wanted the park to encompass: it had to be a gathering space for families, events and celebrations. It needed to be well-lit, safe and designed to attract people to the community. People favoured a more organic design rather than a structured design and emphasized the need for amenities that would support festivals, markets, concerts, and spending time with friends and family. The first two rounds of engagement indicated that the park would be designed for the Concept Phase and be considered for development in the future.



Public Park Option 1



Public Park Option 2

KEY ASPECTS OF THE PARK INCLUDE:

Community Event Space

Participants emphasized what had been said in the previous rounds of engagement: they want the space to remain flexible and an inclusive gathering place for festivals, markets and pop-up tents and concerts. New community groups are emerging and often have challenges in finding public spaces to use for events or recreation. Important amenities that would ensure active programming and use include:

- + Stage/podium for concerts/events
- + Power and water supply
- + Space for commercial use – food trucks, hot dog carts, ice cream stand
- + Alleyway closed for events

Safe

Participants are concerned about the significant social disorder in the area. They fear the park will become a place of drug use, encampments, crime and vagrancy. They want a space that is safe and welcoming for all, and that does not facilitate crime and unsafe behaviours.

The Edmonton Police Service welcomed the project and provided insights into the overall design and the park design in particular. Their in-depth knowledge of the community resulted in several suggestions related to safety and features that could discourage crime and social disorder. Attracting families and children to the park was seen as positive

Arts and Culture

The community is rich in history, culture and tradition. People want the public space to reflect the cultural legacy of the community through art, displays, plantings and overall design. Showcasing locally based public art on murals, carvings, and screens was suggested to honour the diverse heritage of the area.

Winter is also an important part of the fabric of the community. Infrastructure that can be adapted for winter use would add to the attractiveness, vibrancy and overall use of the park. Ideas included ice sculptures, portable firepits, seasonal lights, etc.

Design and Amenities

People imagined the park to be a tranquil gathering place for families in the area and designed in a way that would attract people traveling through on the LRT. Several suggestions highlighted this view:

- + Noise and visual screening from LRT
- + Screen south apartment building
- + Child-friendly elements that encourage imaginative play
- + Colour in seating, screens, and paving
- + Exercise equipment for community use
- + Seating and picnic tables for local and visitor social interaction
- + Greening through trees, plantings, and grass
- + Connect the park to the 107 Avenue with a gateway feature or wayfinding
- + Wi-Fi, plug-ins and water bottle filler

Next Steps

The project team will integrate the thoughts and perspectives of stakeholders and the public into options for the next phase of the project.

Based on public and stakeholder input, the Preliminary Design will be complete in fall of 2022, followed by detailed design in late 2022. Construction for this project is currently scheduled for the 2023 construction season.



107
Ave

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