



Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy

Phase 3 What We Changed Report

Introduction

The Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy will help imagine a new future for parks, plazas, parking lots, sidewalks, alleys and streets. Phase 3 was built upon the valuable input gathered from Edmontonians during Phases 1 and 2 of the project. In Phase 3, the draft strategy containing the key actions, the overall public realm concept and recommended improvements based on that prior engagement input was released.

We are grateful for the time and energy everyone contributed throughout the engagement process. The feedback received from Phase 3 engagement, together with ongoing technical analysis and alignment with policy objectives, informed how to refine the strategy. This *What We Changed Report* summarizes refinements to the strategy and how feedback was used.

Visit edmonton.ca/OldStrathPublicRealm for the Phase 3 What We Heard Report for a full summary of the engagement feedback or for the final draft of the strategy.

Summary of Revisions

In the following chart, the column on the left summarizes significant changes made to the strategy, section by section. The column on the right provides a brief explanation about how feedback may have informed that change.

Strategy Revisions	Revision Rationale
1. Introduction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated references to <i>The City Plan's</i> priority growth area and population projections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions were made to ensure alignment with <i>The City Plan's</i> ongoing implementation work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added references to the Province's Passenger Rail Master Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The addition was made after the April 2024 announcement by the province that the passenger rail master planning may include the Old Strathcona area. For more information visit, https://www.alberta.ca/passenger-rail



2. Making the Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed “Mobility Assessment” heading to “Sidewalk and Alley Assessment” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The heading was changed to be more specific about what was assessed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the text under “Shifts to Traffic” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the engagement feedback, more detail regarding the anticipated shifts to vehicle traffic and addition of bus rapid transit was provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added content to section “2.4 Phase 3 - Draft Public Realm Strategy” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section was previously left blank and was completed now that Phase 3 engagement was done. • In addition to a brief recap of the engagement, analysis and strategy revisions, recent news items related to the Old Strathcona area were highlighted.

3. Recommendations - Key Actions

<p>Action 1 Create a District Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the text under “Proposed Improvements” to better highlight the need and benefit of the district park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the engagement feedback, people asked for clarity about the need, location and benefit of the district park.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the “Trade-offs and Opportunities” subsection with more information on the phasing of parking reductions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the engagement feedback, respondents were concerned with the loss of parking. However, some shared that those concerns could be alleviated if the strategy better described when parking would be reduced (e.g. not in the short term), how it would be phased (e.g. gradually), ensuring accessible parking and having alternatives in place first (e.g. bus rapid transit, parking wayfinding).
<p>Action 2 Create a Gateway Greenway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added a reference encouraging improvements to Gateway Boulevard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the engagement feedback, people shared safety concerns (e.g.



	<p>crossing) and that the future experience using the greenway would benefit from complementary improvements to the roadway.</p>
<p>Action 3 Create an Urban Plaza</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text adjustments were made to allow for flexibility regarding the possible outcomes related to the passenger rail project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text edits were made to better account for the possible future use of the plaza for passenger rail. For more information visit, https://www.alberta.ca/passenger-rail
<p>Action 4 Improve End of Steel Park and Support Mixed Market Development of the Parking lot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Figure 12 with new labels for Ritchie Mill, Strathcona Park, Connaught Armoury and the Yardbird Suite Updated the text encouraging underground parking in new development to serve commercial tenants, employment and/or park visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the engagement feedback, people mentioned the benefit of listing key sites for geographic context. Based on the engagement feedback, possible underground parking in new developments could offset some of the surface parking lots.
<p>Action 5 Support Development next to Connaught Armoury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the text encouraging rehabilitation of the Connaught armoury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text was updated following the departure of the tenant within the Connaught Armoury (a City-owned building at the time of drafting) to account for flexibility for the whole property (building and parking lot).
<p>Action 6 Pedestrianize 83 Avenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added references to seasonal/occasional closures under “Proposed Improvements” and “Key Considerations” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the engagement feedback, respondents and internal teams suggested seasonal or occasional closures should be tested and explored first before a permanent closure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added a key consideration to encourage activation from adjacent buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The addition of this consideration was prompted by the possible sale and/or rehabilitation of the 1909 Strathcona Market building.



<p>Action 7 Prioritizing Pedestrians on Whyte Avenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated mass transit-related text under “Proposed Improvements” • Changed references from “bus based mass transit” to “bus rapid transit” (n.b. change made throughout document) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions were made to ensure alignment with ongoing mass transit work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated text under “Additional space for businesses” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the engagement feedback, businesses mentioned that guidelines or standards may require updating so future sidewalks continue to support patios, business functions and the pedestrian experience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed the heading from “Additional Space for Bioswales and Rain Gardens” to “Additional space for green landscaping” and updated the text underneath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions were made to ensure flexibility and alignment with other city directions related to plantings, landscaping and climate resiliency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added a new table highlighting the public realm elements, their rationale and when to apply each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new table was added to complement “Figure 19 Map Showing Possible Locations of Different Elements Along Whyte Avenue”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the “Trade-offs and Opportunities” sub-section with more information on reduced on-street parking, repurposing general traffic lanes and how emergency vehicles will continue to use Whyte Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the feedback collected through engagement, some respondents wanted more information about each of these topics.

3. Recommendations - Additional Open Space and Mobility Recommendations	
<p>Open Space Retention of Strathcona Park 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated the text around activation, function and municipal reserve redesignation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions were made to clarify the continued activation of the site (whether or not the site continues to be leased), that any commercial activity shall be a secondary function to the site’s primary function as a pocket park, and municipal reserve



	redesignation.
Mobility Alleyway Renewal and Activation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the text in this subsection and Figure 24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions were made to highlight additional opportunities for activation and renewal.
Active Modes on 104 Street / Calgary Trail (Saskatchewan Drive to University Avenue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added this new subsection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This subsection was added to ensure alignment with the draft Scona District plan that highlights additional active transportation improvements, first proposed by the planWhyte study (2018).
Parking Wayfinding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added this new subsection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the engagement feedback, this subsection was added to respond to concerns about the reduction of parking. Respondents shared that knowing the location and availability of the remaining parking spaces will help drivers traveling to the area. A recommendation for additional parking analysis was also added to explore this topic during later stages of implementation.

4. Implementation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the intro to this section Added a new graphic to illustrate the projected phasing of the actions and the gradual reduction of parking Updated the phasing considerations highlighting funding sources, ties to bus rapid transit, sequencing of parking reductions, establishing a parking wayfinding and piloting seasonal closures of 83 Avenue Updated the “Regular Monitoring” subsection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy’s implementation section was revised based on the engagement feedback. The section now provides more detail on projected timelines, how parking reductions will be phased and aligned with the roll out of bus rapid transit and more information about future funding.



Other Revisions

In addition to the specific revisions described above, other edits made throughout the strategy based on the public engagement feedback included:

- Adding a glossary with definitions of frequently used terms
- Referencing other City guidelines or strategies that will be consulted as part of the implementation
- Updating language to be more inclusive and less able-bodied centric

Closing Thoughts

Some feedback, such as retaining surface parking lots or keeping Whyte Avenue as is, did not factor into revisions to the strategy. Reducing and repurposing parking is one example of a trade-off required to realize the proposed improvements to foster vibrant urban places, address climate goals, support housing affordability, encourage modal shifts and enhance livability in Old Strathcona. Parking transitions will take time but further analysis and engagement will occur. Overall, the revised strategy addresses or responds to the multitude of input received during the engagement phase, resulting in a stronger, more comprehensive strategy.

Implementation of the strategy will be phased over several years and aligned or coordinated with other City initiatives. Additional communication and engagement will be required as part of the implementation.

To read the final draft of the strategy or learn more about the project visit edmonton.ca/OldStrathPublicRealm.

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