

West and Southeast LRT

Public Involvement Report 2008-09

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Summary

In 2008, the City of Edmonton initiated a study to develop an LRT corridor recommendation for Southeast LRT and re-evaluate potential West LRT route options. Public involvement was undertaken to support this study, recognizing that new LRT development will play an important role in shaping the future of our City and result in significant benefit and impact to businesses, communities, and institutions.

The public involvement process was developed to fit within the technical analysis of route options using the LRT Route Evaluation Criteria approved by City Council in December 2008. The information gathered throughout the public involvement process was used to seek local knowledge about potential benefits and impacts, and to identify items for further study and consultation once a recommended route was selected.

Events, meetings and communication about opportunities to get involved were targeted to meet project needs for both West and Southeast LRT. The project team took advantage of opportunities to integrate many of the communications and promotional advertisements, and the process was staged to fit within the same time frames.

A total of 2,960 participants contributed to the public involvement process for both West and Southeast LRT. Over 88 public involvement activities were held, including questionnaires, workshops, online consultation, stakeholder interviews/meetings, and open houses.

Participants brought forward a broad range of issues and thoughts about the recommended LRT routes. Throughout the process, participants have shown support for continued LRT development and the use of LRT to influence community and business density and revitalization. However, both corridor proposals have raised concerns relating to issues around changes to surrounding community/business character and concerns about how the LRT will impact the traffic network.

The planning, implementation and analysis of public involvement activities for West and Southeast LRT planning studies was an initiative undertaken with expertise and support from Gray Scott Consulting, Nanos Research, CH2M Hill, and the City of Edmonton.



West LRT

Participation:

From December 2008 to October 2009, over 57 public involvement events were held to support the West LRT study, including questionnaires, workshops, online consultation, interviews, meetings, and presentations. A total of 1,760 people have participated.

December 2008 to April 2009	<p><i>Listening and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 interviews and one-on-one meetings • 502 questionnaires • Presentation at 5 community/stakeholder meetings
May/June 2009	<p><i>Evaluating Benefits and Impacts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 486 attendees at workshops held June 3 and 4, 2009 • 162 participants in eConsultation, which ran June 1-22, 2009 (510 comments posted, 11,534 comments read) • Presentation at 2 community/stakeholder meetings
September/October 2009	<p><i>Sharing information on Recommended Route</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 576 participants at open houses held September 29 and 30, 2009 • Presentations at 7 community/stakeholder meetings
Total:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,760 participants at 57 events, presentations, consultation sessions

For a detailed list of public involvement events/promotional activities, please see appendix A.

Key Themes

Listening and Learning: December 2008 to April 2009

A series of interviews, meetings, and an online questionnaire were undertaken to refine the public involvement plan and gain a greater understanding of the benefits, issues, and impacts of LRT within the study area. This feedback helped refine discussion points, information needs, tools for broader consultation and communication initiatives on route options.

West Edmonton Mall and Stony Plain Road were most frequently identified as key growth areas with the potential to encourage sustained transit use in the west corridor. The Misericordia Hospital and the potential for student population growth in the South Campus area were also identified as areas with high potential.

Participants raised two important competing themes when identifying the primary issues or concerns to be addressed through the study. While many indicated it was important to locate the LRT where there was significant or planned ridership, the most frequently mentioned issue/concern was the desire to minimize neighbourhood disruption. Minimizing travel time by LRT was also a key consideration.

Evaluating Benefits and Impacts: May/June 2009

Online consultation and two public workshops were held to solicit input on the LRT route options. As the technical analysis was completed, information from this phase of consultation was used to ensure local issues were considered within the technical evaluation, and to identify consultation points for further study.

Overall, there was support for using Light Rail Transit as a means to encourage higher residential density and business revitalization. Participants also noted that a holistic approach to LRT planning was needed to recognize neighbourhood and business impacts such as property acquisition, noise, safety/security and parking. There were concerns about the impact on the overall traffic network, and it was noted that pedestrian and cyclist needs should be integrated into planning efforts. Concerns were raised about project costs, property requirements, and business and property value impacts.

Sharing Information on the Recommended Route: September/October 2009

Open houses and presentations to community and stakeholder groups were held to share information on the recommended corridor.

September 2009 Open Houses: Participant Survey Form Results

- Of the 576 participants at the September 2009 open houses, 261 completed survey forms.
- 66% of the respondents indicated the information presented was useful and informative, with 24% indicating they were neutral and 9% indicating disagreement.
- 69% of the respondents indicated the information was easy to understand, with 19% indicating they were neutral and 11% indicating disagreement.
- 78% of the respondents felt the project staff was helpful, friendly and accessible, while 14% were neutral and 8% disagreed.
- 47% of the respondents indicated they were able to find satisfactory answers to questions, while 22% were neutral and 31% disagreed.
- 71% of the respondents indicated they had a better understanding of the project because of their attendance, while 15% were neutral and 15% disagreed.
- The majority of the respondents were new to this LRT process, with only 22% indicating they attended previous workshops held in June 2009.
- 52% of the respondents were satisfied with the City's efforts to keep the public involved in the planning of this project, while 18% were neutral and 30% were not satisfied.

Respondents by Postal Code		
	Number	Percentage
T5N	70	30%
T5R	70	30%
T5P	29	12%
T5T	26	11%
T5K	6	3%
T5M	5	2%
T5H	5	2%
Other	24 (1 T5V, 1 T5W, 1 T5Y, 3 T6G, 1 T6J, 1 T6K, 4 T6M, 1 T6T, 1 T6X, 1 T8M, 2 T0A, 2 T5A, 1 T5B, 1 T5G, 3 T5J)	20%
Total	235	

Key Themes from September 2009

Many participants indicated support for the recommended route, citing benefits to revitalization and higher density land use, and a desire to move forward with the West LRT project. Adopting an urban LRT system style and low-floor technology were also seen as benefits.

While previous consultation found support for reducing property requirements by reducing traffic capacity, significant concerns were raised about the impact reducing traffic lanes would have on the roadway network. This includes concerns about adding to vehicle travel times and a concern the higher demand on alternative roadways would not be accommodated. Concern that access to communities and businesses along the alignment would be reduced was also raised. A number of route alternatives were suggested, including 87 Avenue, 107 Avenue, 100 Avenue, and 170 Street. Other concerns raised include risk the market will not lead to the type of development envisioned; high project costs; disruption and change to established residential communities and a desire to compensate existing owners for changes to property values. Concerns about construction disruption, including reduced access, noise, dust, vibrations were also identified.

Items raised for consideration and future study include LRT station locations and configurations, strategies to address neighbourhood shortcutting, and desire to participate in planning for re-development around station locations. Concern about parasitic parking, desire to add transit parking at feeder stations, and mitigating loss of front-street parking were raised as issues that need study. Plans to address security and safety concerns, ensure accessibility for the disabled community, and actions to preserve historical buildings and communities along the alignment are desired. There is also an interest in impacts to the existing bus network, emergency vehicle routes and road maintenance impacts, and a need to integrate plans for pedestrians/cyclists. Aesthetic considerations such as additional landscaping and a desire to avoid overhead catenary (power system) were also raised.

Southeast LRT

Participation:

From December 2008 to October 2009, over 31 public involvement events were held to support the Southeast LRT study, including questionnaires, workshops, online consultation, interviews, meetings, and presentations. A total of 1,200 people have participated.

December 2008 to April 2009	<p><i>Listening and Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 interviews and one-on-one meetings • 442 questionnaires • Presentation at 5 community/stakeholder meetings
May/June 2009	<p><i>Evaluating Benefits and Impacts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 175 attendees at workshops held June 9 and 10, 2009 • 96 participants in eConsultation, which ran June 1-22, 2009 (126 comments posted, 1,854 comments read) • Presentation at 1 community/stakeholder meeting
September/October 2009	<p><i>Sharing information on Recommended Route</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 475 participants at open houses held September 21 and 23, 2009 • Presentations at 7 community/stakeholder meetings
Total:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,200 participants at 31 events, presentations, consultation sessions

For a detailed list of public involvement events/promotional activities, please see appendix A.

Key Themes

Listening and Learning: October 2008 to April 2009

A series of interviews, meetings, and an online questionnaire were undertaken to refine the public involvement plan, and gain a greater understanding of the benefits, issues, and impacts of LRT within the study area. This feedback helped refine discussion points, information needs, and tools for broader consultation and communication initiatives on route options.

Providing access to Mill Woods and high density neighbourhoods were noted as key drivers to supporting and encouraging transit use. Providing LRT service for students, the Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre, and the Grey Nuns Hospital were also cited as key factors.

Participants raised two important but competing themes when identifying the primary issues or concerns to be addressed through the study. While many indicated it was important to locate the LRT where there was significant or planned ridership, the most frequently mentioned issue/concern was the desire to minimize neighbourhood disruption, where most of the potential ridership exists. Minimizing travel time by LRT and using existing CPR infrastructure where it is feasible were also key considerations.

Evaluating Benefits and Impacts: May/June 2009

Online consultation and two public workshops were held to solicit input on the LRT route options. As the technical analysis was completed, information from this phase of consultation was used to ensure local issues were considered within the technical evaluation, and to identify consultation points for further study.

Overall, there was support for using Light Rail Transit as a means to encourage higher residential density and business revitalization. Participants also noted that a holistic approach to LRT planning was needed to recognize neighbourhood and business impacts such as property acquisition, noise, safety/security and parking. There were concerns about the impact on the overall traffic network, and it was noted that pedestrian

and cyclist needs should be integrated into planning efforts. Concerns were raised about project costs, property requirements, and business and property value impacts.

Sharing Information on the Recommended Route: September/October 2009

In September and October 2009, a series of open houses and presentations to community and stakeholder groups were held to share information on the recommended corridor, collect feedback to report to City Council on the recommended route and identify items for further study and consultation.

September 2009 Open Houses: Participant Survey Form Results

- Of the 475 participants at the September 2009 open houses, 240 completed survey forms.
- 83% of the respondents indicated the information presented was useful and informative, with 11% indicating they were neutral and 6% indicating disagreement.
- 82% of the respondents indicated the information was easy to understand, with 13% indicating they were neutral and 5% indicating disagreement.
- 82% of the respondents felt the project staff was helpful, friendly and accessible, while 14% were neutral and 4% disagreed.
- 59% of the respondents indicated they were able to find satisfactory answers to questions, while 23% were neutral and 18% disagreed.
- 87% of the respondents indicated they had a better understanding of the project because of their attendance, while 9% were neutral and 4% disagreed.
- The majority of the respondents were new to this LRT process, as only 14% indicated they attended previous workshops held in June 2009.
- 58% of the respondents were satisfied with the City's efforts to keep the public involved in the planning of this project, while 22% were neutral and 21% were not satisfied.

Respondents by Postal Code		
	Number	Percentage
T5H	6	3%
T5J	4	2%
T6A	7	3%
T6B	6	3%
T6C	129	58%
T6E	13	6%
T6K	23	10%
T6L	24	11%
Other	10 (2 T5G, 1 T5K, 1 T5N, 1 T5T, 1 T5W, 1 T6T, 1 T8E, 2 T5A)	5%
Total	222	

Key Themes from September 2009

Many participants indicated support and a desire to move ahead with the recommended route, citing benefits to serving the Mill Woods community, planned higher density development, and a desire for a LRT service to the major activity centres in the area.

A frequently raised concern is the potential for noise and vibration impacts, with particular regard to tight LRT turns, LRT warning bells, and construction noise. Changes to existing established communities were also raised, with respondents citing concerns about impact along the LRT alignment in existing residential communities and potential spill-over impacts into other adjacent areas. This includes concerns about traffic impacts and changes to existing vehicle traffic patterns. Concerns about potential property acquisition and impact on property values remain, with some suggestions that alternate routes such as Dawson Bridge and routes using existing CPR infrastructure should be pursued.

Items raised for consideration and future study include a desire to review LRT station locations and configurations, and strategies to address potential for neighbourhood shortcutting and ensuring continued vehicle access to neighbourhoods. There is significant interest in how aesthetic considerations would be taken into account for LRT infrastructure such as grade separations and LRT bridges, impact on parks/green space and LRT right-of-way treatment within the communities and the River Valley, and a suggestion that overhead catenary systems (power) should be avoided. Concern about parasitic parking, pedestrian safety near schools, and a desire to add transit parking at feeder stations were raised as issues that need study. Plans to address

security and safety issues and a review of traffic operations at the Bonnie Doon traffic circle are also desired. A need to review the impact of the LRT on the ski club on ski hill operations was suggested. There is also an interest in what impact the LRT will have on the existing bus network, and a desire to ensure plans for pedestrian/cyclist use are integrated.

Public Involvement

Public involvement and supportive communications activities for the West and Southeast LRT corridor studies have brought forward a wide range of thoughts and views on the LRT. These have been considered within the process and are reported to City Council as part of the decision-making process.

It is important to note the process was not designed nor intended to collaborate with community and stakeholders to determine a recommended route. Many of the considerations within the route selection process were based on technical analysis and evaluation criteria that were set by City Council in recognition of the City's strategic direction and overarching policy goals.

Many participants support the process and it has been successful at bringing forward a broad range of views for consideration; however, a segment of the population would like a more active role in the decision-making and development of the recommended route, particularly in areas that are affected and impacted by a change to their existing situation. Regardless of the route chosen, there will be changes to existing communities and stakeholders.

While this process has included the broadest and most aggressive advertising and communications strategy that has ever been implemented for an LRT planning study, concerns were raised about the notification and advertising completed to advise of public involvement opportunities, suggestions that more should have been done to notify impacted stakeholders of the potential routes remain.

Next Steps

Once recommended corridors are selected for West and Southeast LRT, public consultation and engineering study are needed to enrich decisions to address local impacts and develop location-specific mitigations. This process throughout 2010, and will include:

- Developing strategies to address impacts to: vehicle access to/from communities, overall traffic system, front-street parking
- Confirming locations and configurations of LRT stations, and connections for community and pedestrian access.
- Determining the ultimate LRT alignment within the Transportation Right-of-Way
- Identifying if mitigations are needed per the City's *Urban Traffic Noise Policy*.

Appendix A: Detailed list of public involvement/advertising activities

Date	Activity
October 22, 2008	Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholder information session (community and institutional stakeholders) to provide information on the study, route selection process, opportunities for stakeholder involvement
December 2008	Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one interviews with 12 stakeholders representing business, community and institutional stakeholders to solicit comments on short-listed southeast LRT routes, evaluation criteria, stakeholder involvement
December 2008 to January 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-consultation with seven key stakeholders from previous West LRT study to collect history and background on the public involvement to date and to get input on a proposed public involvement plan for the project.
January 8, 2009	Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project update to Mill Woods Presidents Council
February 23, 2009	West and Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation to Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board. Overview project progress and public involvement plan
March to June 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one interviews with 27 key community league, business and institutional representatives.
March 15, 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation to West Edmonton Community Council. West LRT project status and overview of public involvement process.
March 27 to April 15, 2009	West and Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online/print questionnaire circulated by e-mail to approximately 165 community, commercial and institutional stakeholder groups. Stakeholders were encouraged to share with contact lists, and links were posted on the LRT projects web page for general public participation. Participation: 502 responses to West LRT questionnaire; 442 responses to Southeast LRT questionnaire.
March 30, 2009	West and Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation to Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board
April 8, 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting to provide project background for representatives from Laurier Heights, Lynnwood and Parkview Community Leagues
April 25, 2009	West and Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation at Edmonton Transit System Community Fair/LRT station opening event
May 10, 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend meeting at Glenora Community League to share information on West LRT process to date and advise of upcoming public workshops

June 2009	<p>West and Southeast LRT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public workshops (West: June 3/4; Southeast: June 9/10). Participation : West: 486 attendees; Southeast: 175 attendees) • eConsultation: June 1-22, 2009. Total of 258 participants <p>Promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mail: over 122,000 invitations distributed to residences/businesses along route options (to Canada Post by May 15, 2009) • News Release: public workshop dates (May 21, 2009) • Public Service Announcement: eConsultation start (June 2, 2009) • Ads: Edmonton Sun (May 24/29); Edmonton Journal (May 25/28); Edmonton Examiner (May 27 – zones 5/6/7); Chinese Journal (May 28); Metro (May 27; June 1); See Magazine (June 4); Vue (June 4). Radio: World FM (50 30-sec spots May 24-June 4). • Street signs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ West (May 23 to June 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whitemud Drive/Guardian Road ○ 170 Street/87 Avenue ○ 107 Avenue/142 Street ○ 156 Street/102 Avenue ○ 87 Avenue/149 Street ○ Mayfield Road/107 Avenue (Mayfield Inn) ○ 163 Street/87 Avenue (June 2) ○ Southeast (May 27 to June 11) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gateway Blvd/Whyte Avenue ○ 83 Street/86 Avenue (Bonnie Doon Mall) ○ 75 Street/Argyll Road ○ 86 Street on the north side of Whitemud Drive (Millgate Transit Centre) ○ 28 Avenue east of Mill Woods Road (Lakewood Transit Center) ○ 66 Street/23 Avenue • Email notice to stakeholders/contact list (approximately 230 members) May 21, 2009; June 2, 2009, June 11 2009.
July 27, 2009	<p>West and Southeast LRT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board presentation
September 3, 2009	<p>West and Southeast LRT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route recommendations released <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ News release/media briefing ○ Notice to stakeholder/contact list (approx 260 members)
September 16, 2009	<p>West LRT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Stony Plain Road Business Revitalization Zone board
September 17, 2009	<p>Southeast LRT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Cloverdale Community League meeting

<p>September 21, 23, 29 and 30, 2009</p>	<p>West and Southeast LRT Recommended Corridor Information Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation for Southeast: 475 attendees (Sept 21: 185 attendees; Sept 23: 290 attendees) • Participation for West: 576 attendees (Sept 29: 201 attendees; Sept 30: 375 attendees) <p>Promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising for public information sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Print ads: Edmonton Journal (Sept 15/18); Edmonton Sun (Sept 15/20); Metro News (Sept 15/18); Edmonton Examiner (Sept 16); Chinese Journal (Sept 17); See Magazine (Sept 17); Vue Weekly (Sept 17) ○ Radio Ads on World FM (Fifty 30 second spots from Sept 17 to 21) ○ Invitation sent by direct mail to approximately 57,500 households/businesses along the recommended route (delivery to Canada Post by September 10, 2009) ○ Public Service Announcement (September 18, 2009) ○ Street signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Southeast LRT: placed beginning September 10, 2009 at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 Street & 23 Avenue • 28 Avenue east of Mill Woods Road (Lakewood Transit Center near J Percy Page School) • 86 Street/Whitemud Drive (Millgate Transit Centre entrance) • 50 Street at approx 45 Avenue (entrance into Woodvale Facility) • Scona Road (Old Timers Cabin) • 83 Street/86 Avenue (Bonnie Doon Mall) • 83 Street/Argyll Road • Connors Road/94 Street ▪ West LRT: placed beginning September 18, 2009 at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 142nd Street/Stony Plain Road • Stony Plain Road near Groat Road • 104 Avenue (between 112 Street and 116 Street) • 156 Street/102 Avenue • Guardian Road near Whitemud Drive • 87 Avenue near approx. 174 Street (at/near Transit Station) • 156 Street, east of 91 Avenue (Meadowlark Mall) • 87 Avenue, near 149 Street
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September 24, 2009	Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Southeast Community League Association (SECLA)
September 27, 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to West Edmonton community leaders (hosted by Meadowlark and Grovenor Community Leagues)
October 5, 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Meadowlark Community Town Hall (hosted by Meadowlark Community League)
October 15, 2009	Southeast and West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Edmonton Public School Board
October 15, 2009	Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Town Hall hosted by Avonmore/King Edward Park and Strathearn Community Leagues.
October 19, 2009	Southeast and West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Alberta Health Services
October 19, 2009	Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to meeting hosted by Bonnie Doon Community League
October 21, 2009	West LRT Presentation to Jasper Place Revitalization Committee and Stony Plain Road Business Association
October 22, 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to meeting hosted by Glenwood Community League
Week of October 25, 2009	West and Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mail of detailed LRT corridor information books sent to approximately 60,000 properties along recommended LRT corridors and within the Downtown core.
October 26, 2009	West and Southeast LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board
October 27, 2009	West LRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to West Edmonton Business Association luncheon
November 2, 2009	Southeast LRT Presentation with Edmonton Catholic School Board officials to St. James Catholic Schools Parent Advisory Council meeting.