

What We Heard Report

50 Street to North
Saskatchewan River:

Yellowhead Trail East Widening

Fall 2019

**SHARE YOUR VOICE
SHAPE OUR CITY**

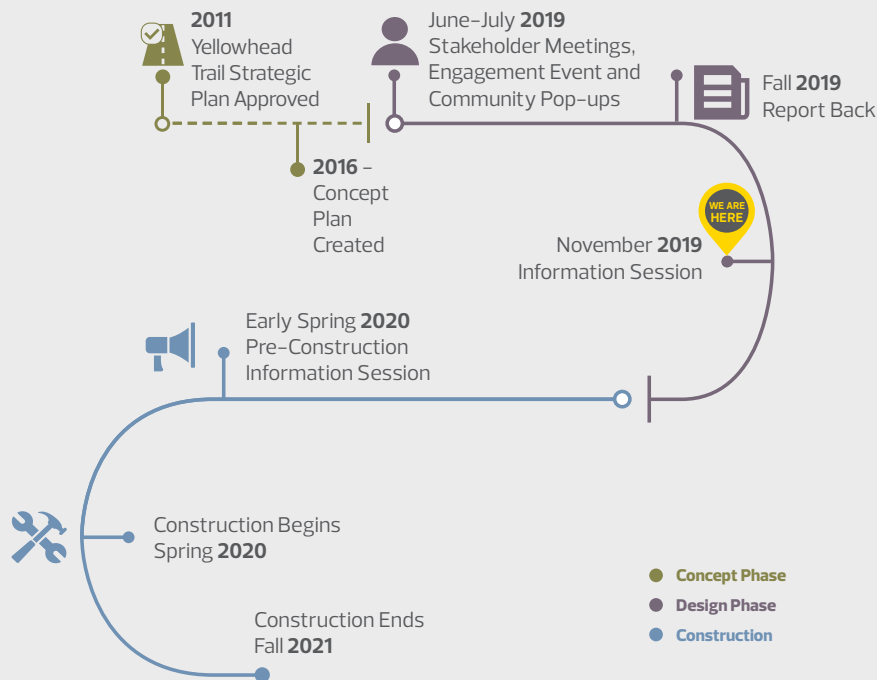
Edmonton

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2011–2012, the City of Edmonton completed and endorsed a strategic plan for the development of Yellowhead Trail to become a freeway. This means six lanes of free-flowing traffic travelling at a target speed of 80 km/hr along most of the corridor. As part of the Yellowhead Trail East Widening Project, Yellowhead Trail will be widened to three travel lanes in each direction, between 50 Street and North Saskatchewan River, to improve safety and traffic flow. Improvements will also be made to the existing ramps at 50 Street and Victoria Trail interchanges.

50 Street to North Saskatchewan River: **Yellowhead Trail East Widening**

Project Timeline



WHAT WE ASKED AND HOW WE ASKED

Between June and July of 2019, the project team held the following events and meetings:



2 community pop-ups:
over **60** participants



1 public engagement event:
over **70** participants



8 stakeholder meetings:
over **15** participants

+ Community Pop-ups – July 2019

The first pop-up event was held on July 12 at the Industrial Heights Business Park. We asked about the current user experience from business owners, truck drivers and industrial employees who drive, bike or walk in this area. The pop-up also shared information about the changes being made to the area.

On July 20, we hosted a pop-up along the shared-use path in the eastern part of the project area. We asked why and how often the public used the path and how we could improve their user experience as part of this project.

The project team also attended a public engagement event organized for the Yellowhead Trail 66 Street Concept Planning project to introduce the Yellowhead Trail East Widening project to attendees and answer any questions.

+ Public Engagement Event – July 17, 2019

On July 17, we hosted a public engagement event at the Abbottsfield Recreation Centre. We asked people who drive, bike or walk in the project area to share their thoughts about their current user experience. We also asked how we could improve the way we communicate with the public in the future.

+ Stakeholder Meetings – June to July 2019

Throughout June and July, project team members met with different groups to share the concept plan and ask what is important to them about the area as it is today. These groups included community leagues, schools, transportation groups and business associations. We also asked how we could improve the way we communicate with the public in the future.

Feedback gathered from these groups was considered by the project team during design, engagement and communications planning.

HOW WE INVITED THE PUBLIC TO OUR EVENTS

We invited the public to participate in our engagement opportunities using the following channels:

- + Newspaper Advertisements
- + Social Media
- + Postcard
- + Posters
- + Roadway Signs
- + Property Owner Letters
- + Project Webpage Updates
- + Public Service Announcement
- + Email to subscribers

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

The City of Edmonton uses an engagement spectrum to show the role and the level of influence the public has during decision making. For the purpose of this project, the input collected was on the "ADVISE" level of the engagement spectrum. That means that we considered the public's feedback along with other information such as technical requirements, policy considerations and freeway standards to develop the design plan.



WHAT WE HEARD

The key themes we heard across all engagement opportunities are summarized below.

YHT: 50 Street to the North Saskatchewan River User Experience

- + **Traffic Congestion:** People who drive spoke about avoiding Yellowhead Trail in the project area due to too much traffic, especially during busy travel times. They use different routes, such as the Anthony Henday, to drive to their destinations faster and to avoid traffic signals. Traffic signals at Victoria Trail and 50 Street were also noted to be poorly timed, with drivers saying they have to stop at multiple lights when driving to their destination.
- + **Merging Challenges:** The public shared that the length and spacing between northbound to eastbound and southbound to eastbound ramps at Victoria Trail are not adequate for safe merging. They stated that traffic congestion is impacting the ability to merge properly and safely onto Yellowhead Trail.
- + **Traffic Noise:** Participants suggested that the current noise wall, located south of St. Maria Goretti Catholic School, does not adequately block traffic noise. Residents on the north side of Yellowhead Trail are also concerned about traffic noise.
- + **Width of Bridges:** Concerns among large vehicle drivers were raised about the width of the bridges at Victoria Trail and 50 Street as Yellowhead Trail is a widely used connection for transportation and the movement of goods. People who drive, especially those who drive large trucks, suggested widening the bridges to support drivers with large loads and to enhance safety for smaller vehicles on the roadway.
- + **Sightline Issues:** People who drive noted that their sightlines are often impacted by larger vehicles turning across an intersection, which reduces safety along the corridor.
- + **Lane Configuration:** Drivers voiced that the current lane configuration and pavement markings at the interchanges do not clearly guide people into the correct lane when turning on and off Yellowhead Trail.

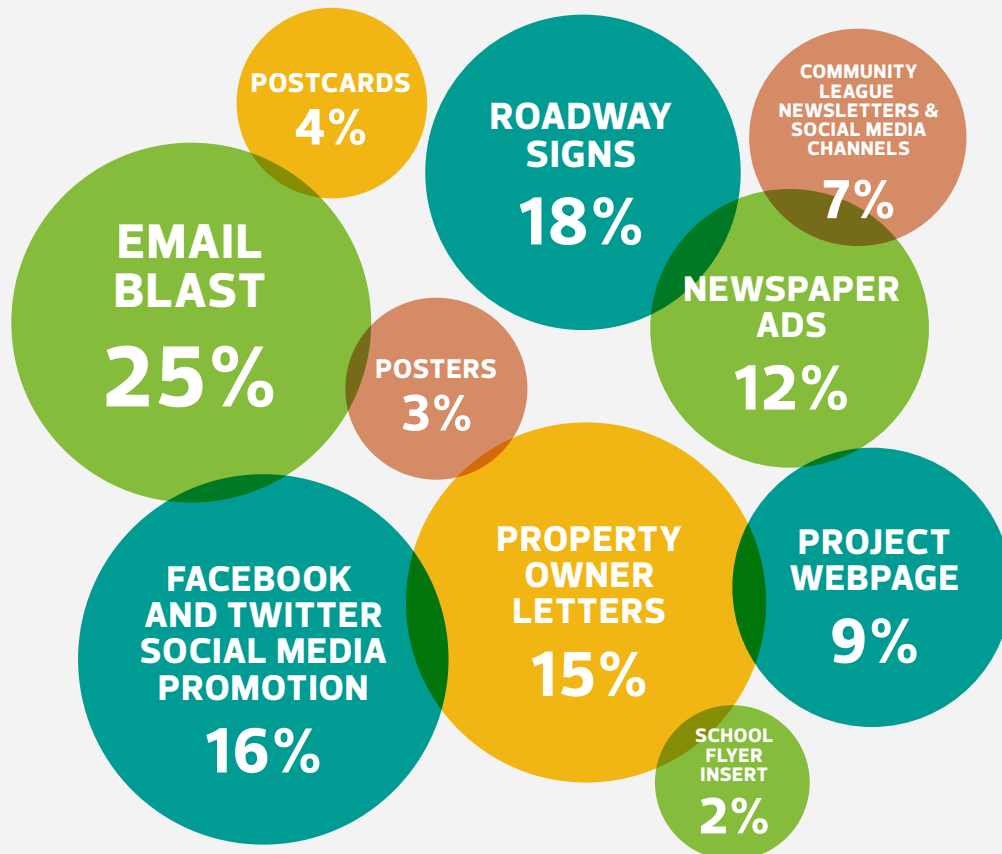
Shared-Use Path User Experience

- + **Lighting:** People who walk and bike shared that the lack of lighting along the pathway and the Victoria Trail underpass was a safety concern, particularly at night and early in the morning. They suggested that more users would use the path at all times of the day if lighting was improved.
- + **Unsafe Activity:** People who walk and bike had concerns with unsafe activity along the shared-use path and in the Victoria Trail underpass. Users said that the tunnel in particular, experienced the most negative activity because it is hidden from public sight.
- + **Debris:** We heard from people who walk and bike that the pathway, particularly along the Victoria Trail underpass, is usually littered with debris such as garbage, needles and broken glass. Users shared that improved upkeep and maintenance of the path is important to the overall experience of the path.
- + **Accessible Connection:** The majority of people who walk and bike enjoy using the pathway for both recreational and commuting purposes. Whether it's a quick connection to downtown, or a Saturday stroll, the experience was positive in terms of the route and connections to and from the path.
- + **Visibility:** People who use the shared-use path voiced that sightlines were an issue along some areas of the pathway. They suggested that it can be difficult to see other users due to surrounding trees and long grass. The area running underneath Victoria Trail in particular, is a safety concern for many.

Project Communications

The 70 participants who attended the July 17th public event were asked to identify their preferred communications channels.

The choices and suggestions made are summarized below:



OTHER SUGGESTED METHODS:

RADIO, TV,
BEVERLY COMMUNITY
NEWSLETTER,
EVENTS,
LONDONDERRY LIBRARY
BULLETIN BOARD

People had questions about the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program and other projects beyond the limits of this one. Information was provided during the event and more information can be found online at edmonton.ca/YellowheadTrail.

Next Steps

The feedback shared was considered by the project team during design and communications planning. The team is currently conducting technical studies to better understand the needs and requirements of the area.

The design plans for the area will be shared at a public information session on November 13, 2019, at the Riverview Crossing Mall located at 3210 118 Avenue NW.

For project updates sign up for the email list or visit the project website at edmonton.ca/yellowheadeastwidening.

