

City of Edmonton **Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program**

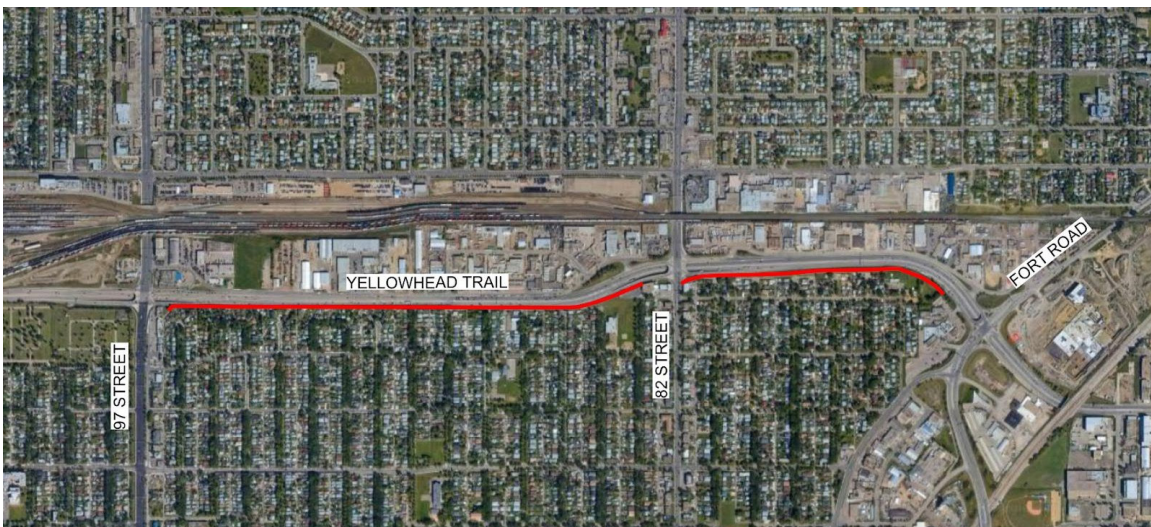
# **What We Heard Report:** Noise Reduction System (97 Street to Fort Road)

**February 2021**

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# What We Heard and What We Did Report: Noise Reduction System (97 Street to Fort Road)



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Edmonton is replacing the noise wall from 97 Street to Fort Road as part of the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program. The deteriorating wall will be replaced with a new system that provides the communities of Delton, Elmwood Park, and part of Eastwood with:

- + Continued buffering from traffic noise on Yellowhead Trail.
- + An attractive, visually pleasing modern structure.
- + A shared-use path that creates an active transportation feature in the community.

More project information is available online: [www.edmonton.ca/YellowheadNRS](http://www.edmonton.ca/YellowheadNRS)

## THE PLAN: An Attractive Shared-Use Path

Noise walls have changed since the existing wall was built over 35 years ago.



Modern Noise Reduction Systems have the potential to be a feature in the community and along Yellowhead Trail. The City is proposing a Noise Reduction System that shifts the wall closer to Yellowhead Trail where space allows, freeing up space for an attractive shared-use path that creates an active transportation feature in the community.

The concept has the potential to transform the space for residents of all ages, offering a visually appealing area, with landscaping and other amenities. The shared-use path will also increase connectivity to other neighbourhoods and benefit active mode users, including cyclists and pedestrians. Along with increased lighting, these features will help create a secure and friendly community space.

In addition to a shared-use path, new amenity nodes at the cul-de-sacs will provide opportunities for additional plantings, seating, and lighting.



## HOW YOUR INPUT SHAPED THE PLAN

Community and stakeholder input is important and informed the plan for the project area. The project team offered the community the opportunity to provide input on the overall plan, the colour and pattern of the new noise reduction system. Perspectives from the community included:

- + Their opinions on the colour and design pattern of the Noise Reduction System
- + Placement of lighting along the structure, and increased use of lighting
- + Bollards, high canopy trees, and other features designed to increase attractiveness and safety in the area
- + Seating in amenities areas designed to accommodate comfort and safety needs
- + Incorporation of an "art wall" on the wall adjacent to the school
- + Specific conversations aimed at minimizing disruption with those whose properties are directly adjacent to the project area.



## HOW WE ENGAGED

Recognizing that COVID-19 represents an unpredictable and unique scenario, the City made the decision to cancel all in-person public engagement events until further notice.

To ensure the health and safety of participants, a virtual information session with community members and an online survey were conducted. Engagement efforts focused on the “community side” of the wall and the future users of the shared-use path and amenities. These virtual and online opportunities were at the ADVISE level of the Public Engagement Spectrum.



The following engagement activities took place:

- + Hand-delivered letters to 52 stakeholders living adjacent to the existing wall. The letters provided a project overview, renderings of the area most relevant to their property, and an offer to meet with members of the project team to discuss any questions or concerns they had about the project
- + Newsletters to residents between 97 Street to Fort Road and between 123 Avenue and the Yellowhead Trail Noise Wall
- + Phone calls and emails to the Delton and Elmwood Park Community Leagues and to St. Gerard School
- + An online information session on November 12. This 90-minute session featured members of the project team sharing information and conversation with six members of the community
- + An online survey between November 12 to 20 which drew 34 responses
- + A virtual meeting between Elmwood Park Community League board and members of the project team to discuss relocating their fence and community garden
- + Curriculum-based activities for the teachers and students of St. Gerard's School are planned to be delivered throughout 2021

## WHAT WE HEARD

Common themes arose from the engagement sessions. The themes included:

- + Overall support and excitement about the new noise reduction system
- + Acknowledgment that community safety concerns needed to be addressed in the design of the Noise Reduction System
- + The "gap" in the wall at 97 Street
- + The preference of the wall pattern and colour

What follows is a further explanation of these themes.

Those engaged at the online information session and survey respondents were very supportive of the project and thought it would enhance the community.



*"I was excited when I saw the newsletter. The {current} wall looks crappy. I'm excited about it. For a long time, I thought the whole stretch is a good path, so to see it with lighting and stuff is great, I walk it every day with my dog. Thanks so much."*

*"It looks beautiful"*



There were several concerns for personal safety and usability due to drug deals, prostitution, dumping and graffiti that take place in the current location. People thought that a well-lit, well-traveled path, that had 'eyes on the street' would help resolve some of these issues.

Participants also suggested high canopy trees would be welcome. Participants thought that high canopy trees would increase visibility and contribute to the area feeling safer. Participants also favoured increased lighting, and thought that blocking vehicular access would contribute to the safety of the area. They also preferred benches with an armrest in the middle of the seat.

The project team explained that the shared-use path will be built from 89 Street to Fort Road. The alley behind the wall from 89 Street to 97 Street will provide a connection for active users to the 97 Street interchange. Participants suggested that the gap in the wall at 97 Street might encourage dumping, loitering, and graffiti.

When asked about the colour and pattern of the new Noise Reduction System, participants in the online Information Session preferred the “Meandering River” pattern in brown. This differs from the survey results in the next section where participants prefer grey.



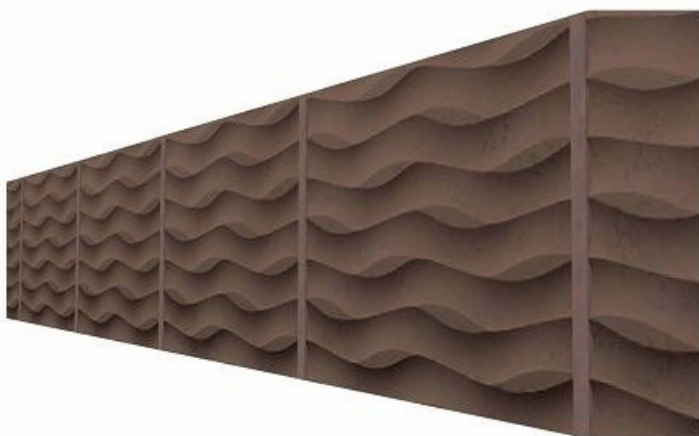
*“I was leaning to grey before I heard it looked like cement. I'd rather river brown. I lean to the meandering look.”*



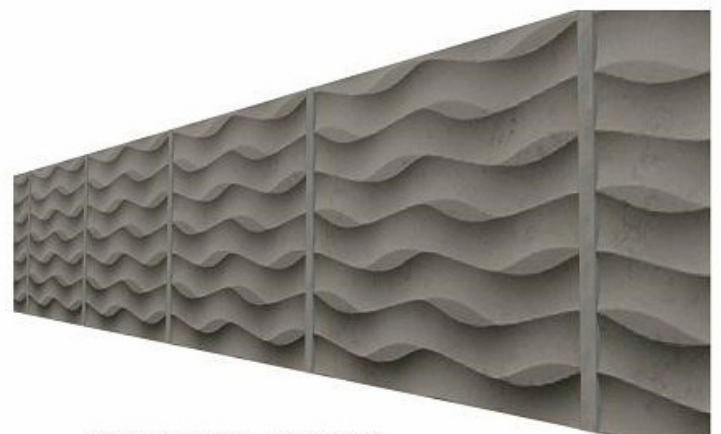
Construction noise and disruption was a concern for people, and they requested that construction not take place during overnight hours.

The survey results paralleled the virtual and in person conversations. 34 respondents completed the survey.

When looking at colour preference, slightly less than two-thirds of respondents preferred the light grey option, while a little more than one-third preferred a colour similar to the existing wall. Respondents indicated a very strong preference for the meandering river pattern, with almost all selecting this option.



**COLOUR OPTION: SIMILAR TO EXISTING WALL COLOUR**



**COLOUR OPTION: LIGHT GREY**

Respondents provided 12 comments about the project plans overall, which in general were supportive of the shared-use aspect of the project.



*"I like the project and support using the land and alley along the wall as a pedestrian and bike friendly corridor."*



Connectivity was also commented on in the survey.



*"The heavily used crosswalk at 125 Avenue and 82 Street is poorly designed for the volume of pedestrian circulation and could be incorporated as a continuation of the path."*

*Improve access for cyclists to continue on 97 Street, who cannot currently cross on the south side of the 97 Street/Yellowhead intersection, preventing access to the shared path on the west side."*



Respondents also emphasized the importance of lighting in creating a safe, friendly area.



*"The area needs to be very well lit. People will be encouraged to use this area if it is welcoming and well lit."*



As with the online information session, participants had concerns with construction disruption and requested that night-time construction noise be reduced as much as possible saying that "overnight noise significantly impacts families and others who work daytime hours".

Respondents suggested other site features to improve the attractiveness and vibrancy of the Noise Reduction System. Community flower gardens, opportunity for art, creative design of amenities such as benches were a few ideas suggested.



*"Consider incorporating an artistic area for murals, children's handprints and some animal shapes in the design element; focus on garbage, recycling and pet refuse stations, and possibly an outdoor water tap."*

*"Add more trees, bushes and greenery from 93 Street to 97 Street."*





## WHAT'S NEXT

The project team have reviewed the engagement results and where possible, incorporated the engagement comments into the design considerations. We are moving into the Build Phase of our project with construction scheduled to begin in the summer of 2021.



## BE INFORMED

For project updates, sign up for the email list or visit the project website at [www.edmonton.ca/YellowheadNRS](http://www.edmonton.ca/YellowheadNRS)

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