

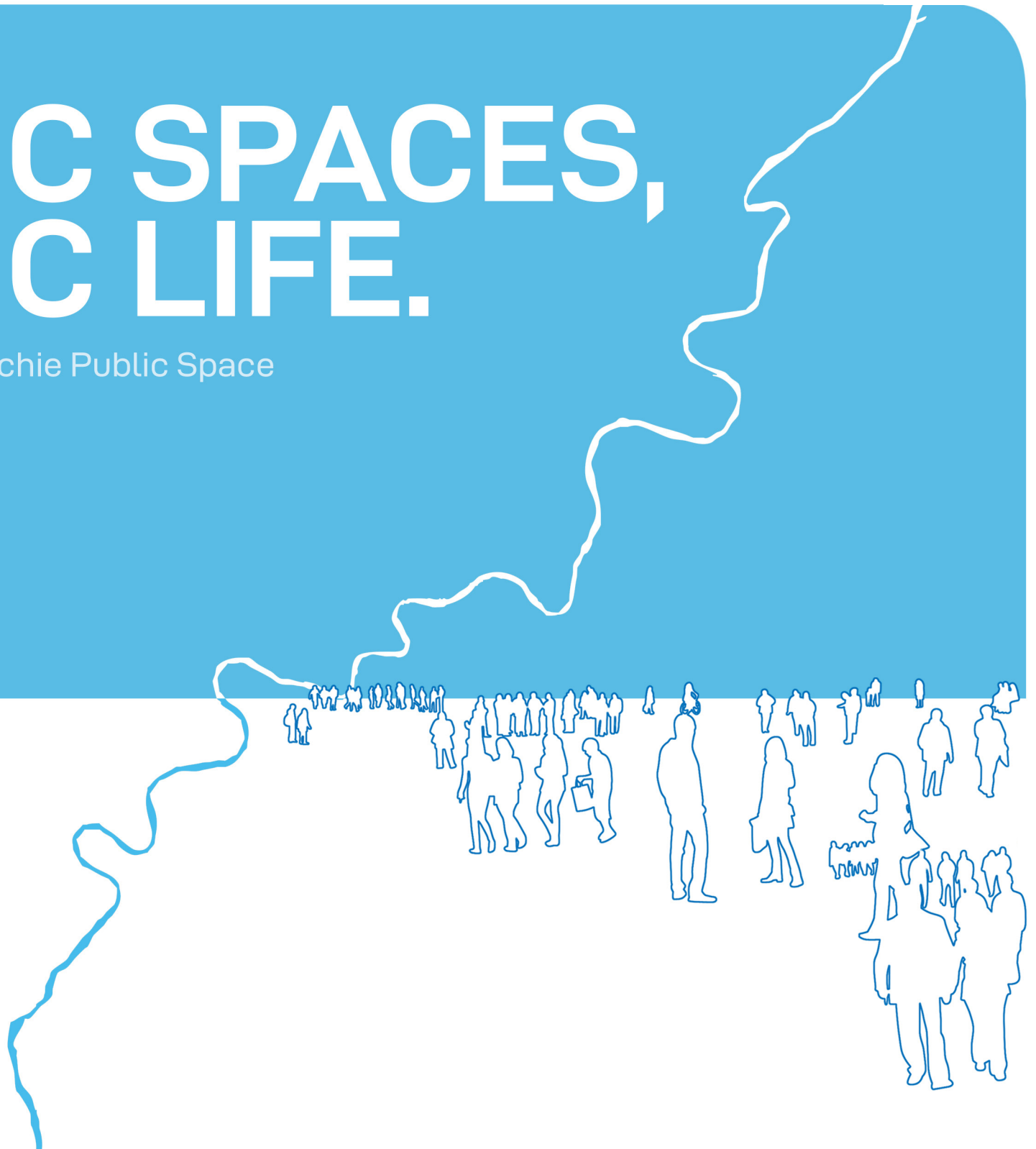
PUBLIC SPACES, PUBLIC LIFE.

The Gateway / West Ritchie Public Space
and Connectivity Plan

Edmonton



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
SCHOOL OF URBAN AND
REGIONAL PLANNING



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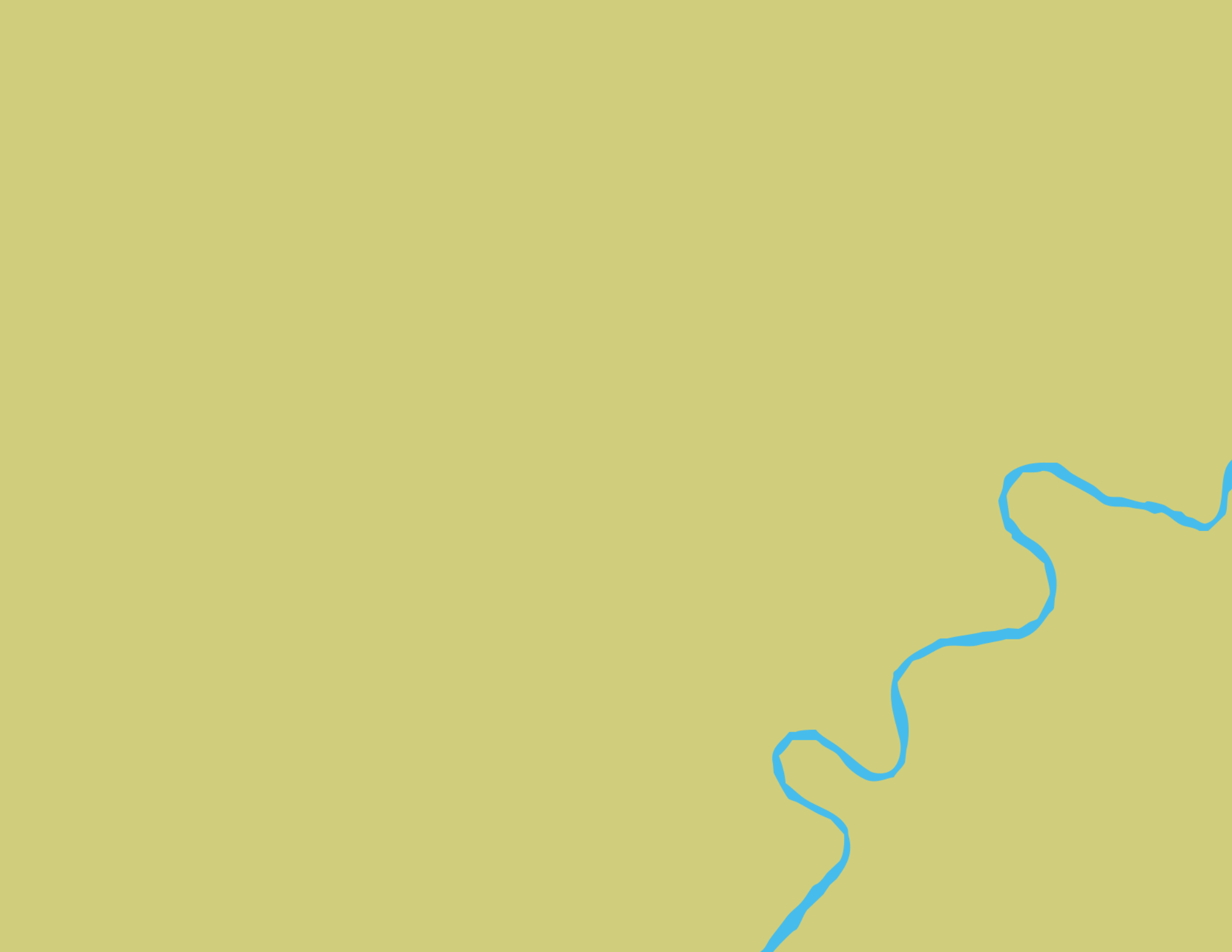
FOREWORD

“

Old Strathcona and West Ritchie are unique areas, full of dynamic heritage and vibrant activity. The *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* harnesses this vibrancy and sets forth a vision for a more connected, animated, and resilient community. Several transformative changes are occurring in the area, with the desire for a more connected city, a greener city, and the activation of under-utilized spaces in the area. The Plan accounts for the changing nature of the area and provides a comprehensive framework for activated public space, enhanced mobility, and all-inclusive public life.

”

- the project team





Executive Summary

the public spaces, public life plan

Executive Summary

PUBLIC SPACES. PUBLIC LIFE.

The Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA) has sponsored the creation of the *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* (henceforth, “the Plan”) for the area of Gateway/West Ritchie. The Plan provides direction for placemaking through a 20 year vision, by outlining the improvement of open spaces, mobility, transportation connections, and public spaces in Gateway/West Ritchie. The Plan offers recommendations related to the design, development, and programming of the public realm to enable new public spaces to be created with intention, and existing public spaces to be enlivened with more people and activities.

The Plan’s framework was heavily influenced by the *planWhyte Land Use Study* that underwent extensive public engagement in the development of three strategic areas: amending the Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan, creating a public places plan for Old Strathcona, and outlining key considerations for transportation safety and operation.

In February 2020, the *Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan* was amended to include the objectives of the *planWhyte Land Use Study*, including a recommended special study for the City parking lots adjacent to the Old Strathcona Farmers’ Market.

The OSBA identified Gateway/West Ritchie as the site area for a public space and connectivity plan for the following reasons:

- Gateway/West Ritchie is disconnected from the high pedestrian traffic sections of Whyte Avenue
- Several large-scale proposals promise to bring more people and activities to the area
- Part of the site area is acknowledged as a special study area in the Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan
- The site area includes underdevelopment and underutilized land

The Plan follows the statutory directions of the *The City Plan*, the *Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan* and the *Strathcona Junction Area Redevelopment Plan*, and has alignment with the objectives of the *OSBA Strategic Plan* and the *planWhyte Land Use Study*.

The Plan is divided into four phases completed between January 2020 and April 2020. Literature reviews, policy reviews, area analysis, and several methods of engagement were conducted therein:

- **Phase One: Visioning + Analysis**
- **Phase Two: Concept Development**
- **Phase Three: Gathering Input**
- **Phase Four: Plan Finalization**

Executive Summary

PUBLIC SPACES. PUBLIC LIFE.

In phases one (**Visioning + Analysis**) and two (**Concept Development**), the project team completed a site analysis to determine the areas strengths and opportunities, created guiding principles to provide design direction, and held a design charrette with planning and design professionals to generate alternative design concepts for the area on the themes of connectivity, built form, and open space. The outcomes from these activities include a *What We Heard Report* (Appendix B) that summarizes the main themes from the design charrette, and a preliminary list of design recommendations based on the site analysis, guiding principles and design charrette.

Preliminary recommendations are categorized in the following format:

1. **Big Moves** outline long-term transformational changes to Gateway/West Ritchie that will have major impacts on public spaces and connectivity
2. **Recommendations** outline medium-term strategies that have lasting impacts on public space and connectivity; these include both place-based and program-based recommendations
3. **Strategies** outline short-term, actionable, low-cost initiatives that present the community with a place to start

In **phase 3: Gathering Input**, the project team engaged local businesses, targeted stakeholders, stakeholder groups (The Old Strathcona Community Council and the OSBA Board) to receive feedback on the preliminary recommendations and to build relationships. In order to gain community buy-in for the plan, the project team organized a public Open House.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Open House scheduled for March 14 was cancelled.

In **phase 4: Plan Finalization**, the project team finalized the list of recommendations for the OSBA. Despite cancelling the Open House, on-going engagement and research activities in each phase provided the project team with ample amounts of evidence to support each recommendation. The following recommendations include:

Executive Summary

PUBLIC SPACES. PUBLIC LIFE.

4 Big Moves:

1. **A Grand Boulevard** will follow the length of the provincially protected High Speed Rail Corridor and connect south toward Saskatchewan Drive.
2. **New East-West Connections** will address the disconnection between Gateway Boulevard, West Ritchie, and Old Strathcona.
3. **A Reclaimed Whyte Avenue** will reallocate space to pedestrians to support streetscapes that can balance a mixture of activities, active transportation, and people.
4. **A Developed CP Railyards** provides an exciting “blank canvas” for development, including a grid street structure, massing characteristics, active transportation, and public spaces.

17 Recommendations: Examples include, enhancing crosswalks, streamlining permitting for parklets, activating Station Park, increasing area greenery, expanding the bike grid, and turning 81 Avenue into a main street, etc.

21 Strategies: Examples include, painting the intersection of 81 Avenue and 100 street, creating a small shared-use path along the protected provincial rail corridor, encouraging pop up retail and art displays, host PARK(ing) Day activities on 81 Avenue, etc.

The Plan encourages a bottom-up approach to empower the community of Old Strathcona by serving as an easily navigable roadmap to improve public spaces/connectivity and to enhance Gateway/West Ritchie as a thriving business and destination district. The Plan is designed to encourage collaboration with community groups, neighbourhood organizations, the City of Edmonton and the business community.

Executive Summary

PUBLIC SPACES. PUBLIC LIFE.

Place-Based Recommendations

- ① Festival Plaza
- ② Station Park
- ③ Linear Park
- ④ 81 Avenue Main Street
- ⑤ Crosswalk Improvements
- ⑥ Whyte Avenue Public Realm
- ⑦ CP Railyards Development
- ⑧ Expanded Bike Network
- ⑨ 83 Avenue Woonerf
- ⑩ Multi-Modal Hub

Program-Based Recommendations

- Placemaking Toolkit
- Placemaking Grant
- Greenery
- Parklets & Streeteries
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- West Ritchie Identity
- Wayfinding Strategy
- Street Furnishing

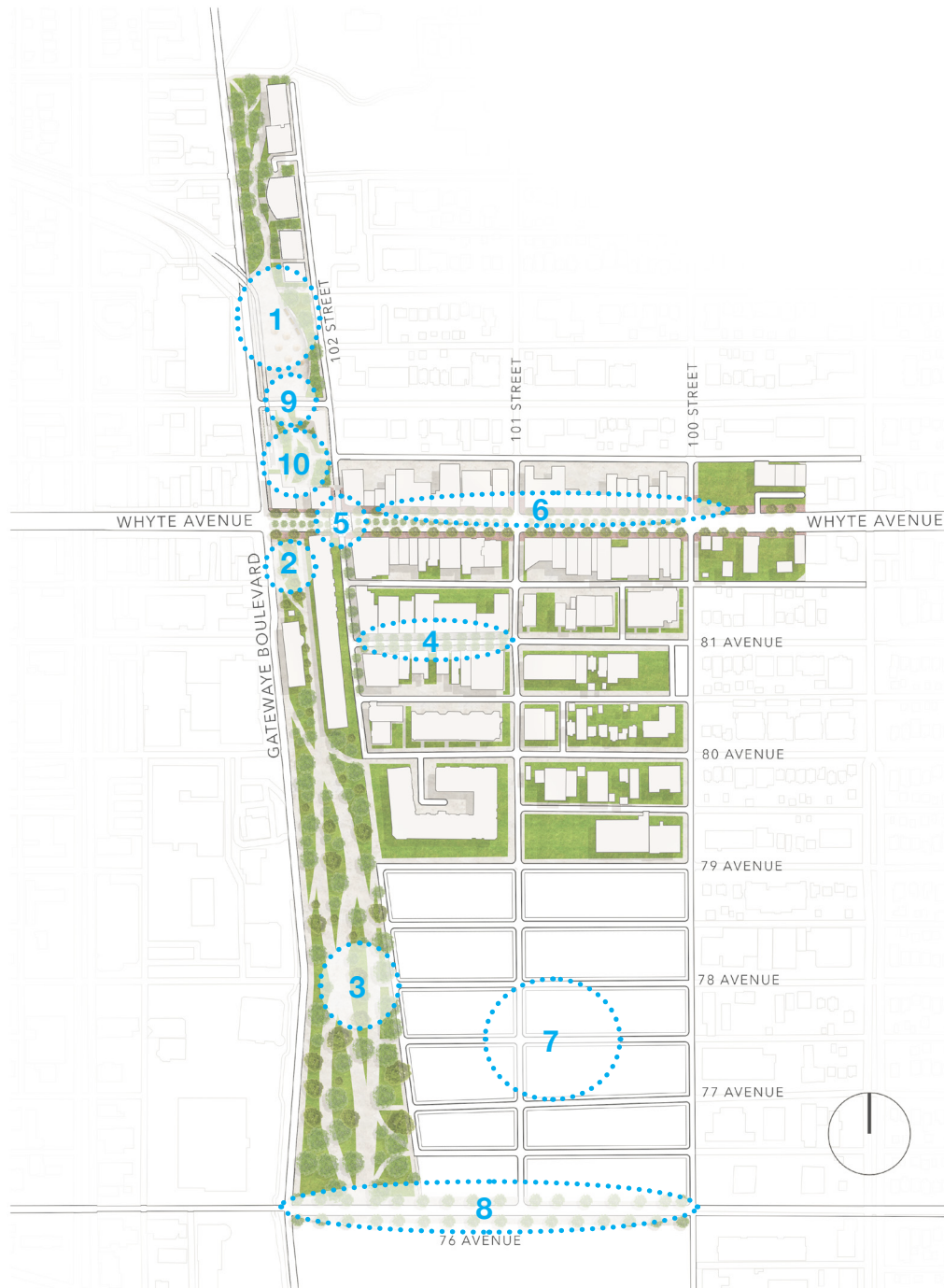


Figure 1.1: The master concept for Gateway/West Ritchie with place-based recommendations



Overview

introduction + background

Introduction

The PSPL Plan

The Old Strathcona Business Association (henceforth, the “OSBA”) chose the area of Gateway/West Ritchie (see Figure 1.1) for a public spaces plan, because it is disconnected from the high pedestrian traffic sections of Whyte Avenue, it includes undeveloped and underutilized land, and it has large-scale proposals (an urban gondola, a Downtown walking path connection, future intensified public transit on Whyte Avenue, and the future development of the CP Railyard) that promise to bring more activities, modes of transportation, points of interest and people to Gateway/West Ritchie.

Public spaces that encourage active lifestyles, celebrate Edmonton’s diversity and heritage, connect different modes of transportation, and allow people to prosper in sustainable environments are needed in order for the area of Gateway/West Ritchie to become a true destination in itself. *The Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* provides direction for the creation of public spaces that will

continue to attract businesses and encourage people to live, work and explore the area.

Gateway/West Ritchie receives a lot of its foot traffic from citizens and visitors to Edmonton, due to the area’s heritage character and proximity to City landmarks: the Old Strathcona Provincial Historic area, The Old Strathcona Farmers’ Market, and the High Level Bridge Streetcar. The area, however, lacks its own sense of place, receives far less foot traffic outside of the Farmers’ Market Saturday operations and Streetcar season, and suffers from from walkability that’s inhibited by the physical barrier of Gateway Boulevard, a perception of risk from vacant and underutilized parcels of land, and a fragmented Whyte Avenue. To empower the community, and bolster the future public places plan for Old Strathcona, *Public Spaces, Public Life* provides a series of recommendations that enables placemaking through a 20 year vision.

The Plan was heavily influenced by the *planWhyte Land Use Study* that underwent extensive public engagement in the development of three strategic areas: amending the Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan, creating a public places plan for Old Strathcona, and outlining key considerations for transportation safety and operation. In February 2020, the *Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan* was amended to include the objectives of planWhyte including a recommended special study for the City parking lots adjacent to the Farmers’ Market. By incorporating these high level objectives, the *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* not only provides the community with strategies for placemaking, it can also be used by City administration to inform the creation of a public places plan for Old Strathcona.

Plan Purpose

Why now?

The *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* (henceforth, “The Plan”) provides direction for placemaking through a 20 year vision, by outlining the improvement of open spaces, mobility, transportation connections, and public spaces in Gateway/West Ritchie. The plan offers recommendations related to the design, development, and programming of the public realm to enable new public spaces to be created with intention, and existing public spaces to be enlivened with more people and activities.

The Plan has been made for the Old Strathcona Business Association as a roadmap that will guide the process for attaining the long-term 20 year vision. The Old Strathcona Business Association provides a unique business proposition that encourages finding new and innovative ways to enhance the visitor experience and maintain Old Strathcona as one of Edmonton’s most vibrant places.

The Plan complements this direction with recommendations that are bold and innovative to strengthen Gateway/West Ritchie as a historically rich and instrumental destination in Edmonton.

The Old Strathcona Business Association works collaboratively with community groups, neighbourhood organizations, the City of Edmonton and valued business stakeholders. To capitalize on this collaboration, the plan is designed to outline how each stakeholder is interconnected and responsible for the successful implementation of the recommendations. The Plan recognizes that achieving the recommendations can enhance and create new partnerships in the community of Old Strathcona.

Implementing The Plan will empower the community of Old Strathcona by serving as an easily navigable roadmap for the average person to improve public spaces/connectivity and to enhance Gateway/West Ritchie as a thriving business and destination district. The Plan encourages a bottom-up approach by encouraging neighbourhood residents, community groups, and the business community to play a responsible and progressive role in placemaking. Community empowerment is emphasized to help the community build relationships and provide a sense of ownership for the state of the public realm.

Plan Area

Boundaries

The *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* includes the areas directly east of the Old Strathcona Farmer's Market from Gateway Boulevard (103 Street) to 102 Street, bounded by 85 Avenue to the north. The site then extends south and includes the north side of Whyte Avenue until the mid point between 100 Street and 99 Street. Further south, the area includes part of West Ritchie, bounded by 100 Street to the east and Gateway Boulevard to the west, ending at the south edge of 76 Avenue.

A provincially protected high speed rail corridor follows the site along the east side of Gateway Boulevard. The corridor is being protected by the Government of Alberta for a future provincial rail system.

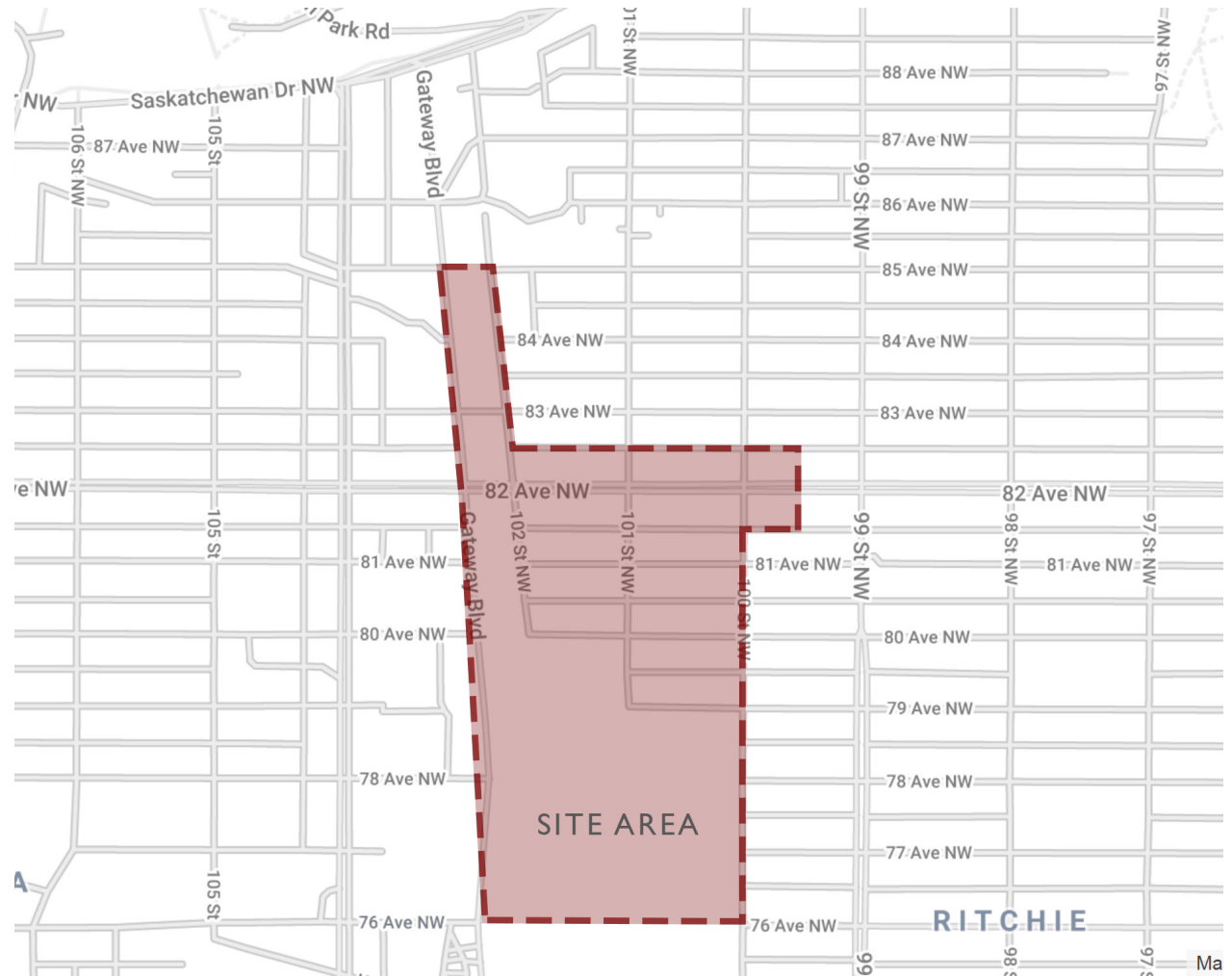


Figure 1.1: Plan Area

Plan Area Districts

The plan area was chosen by the OSBA to enhance public life by providing the area with strategies that improve connections and public space. West Ritchie is the only built-up section in the plan area and is defined by the OSBA's business improvement area boundaries. The Plan area also includes the undeveloped sections of both the Canadian Pacific Railyard and the City surface parking lots (adjacent to the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market). The plan area has four sections with distinct features:

1. **Lands north of Whyte Avenue**
2. **Whyte Avenue**
3. **West Ritchie**
4. **The CP Railyard**

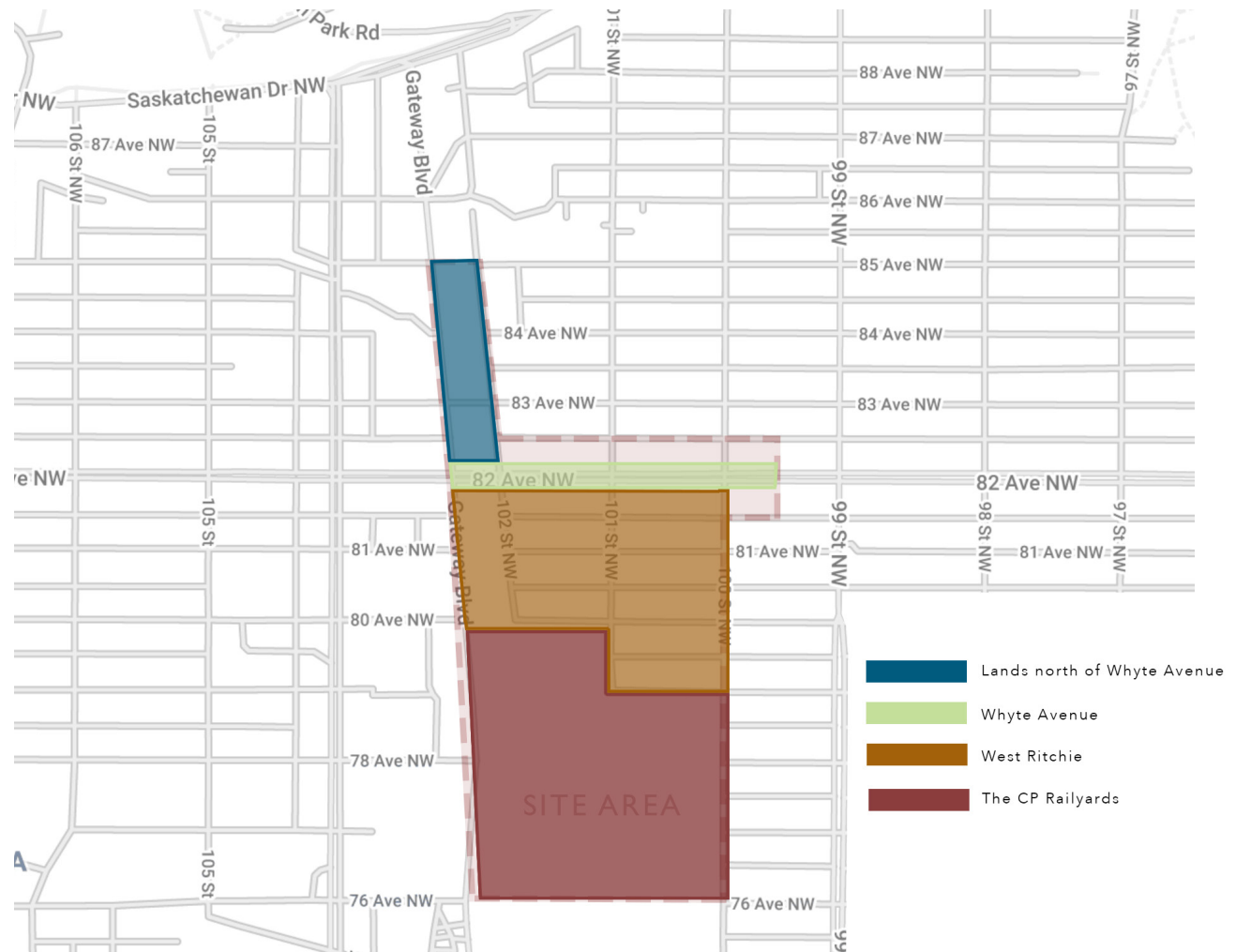


Figure 1.2: Different land sections in the Plan Area

Plan Area

Land North of Whyte Avenue

The plan area includes a section of land north of Whyte Avenue. This section is bounded by Whyte Avenue to the south, 85 Avenue to the north, Gateway Boulevard to the west and 102 Street to the east. While new pathways on Gateway Boulevard and east-west multi-use connections are being built as part of the Building Great Neighbourhoods Strathcona Neighbourhood Renewal project, the area is defined by surface level parking lots and unbuffered sidewalks.

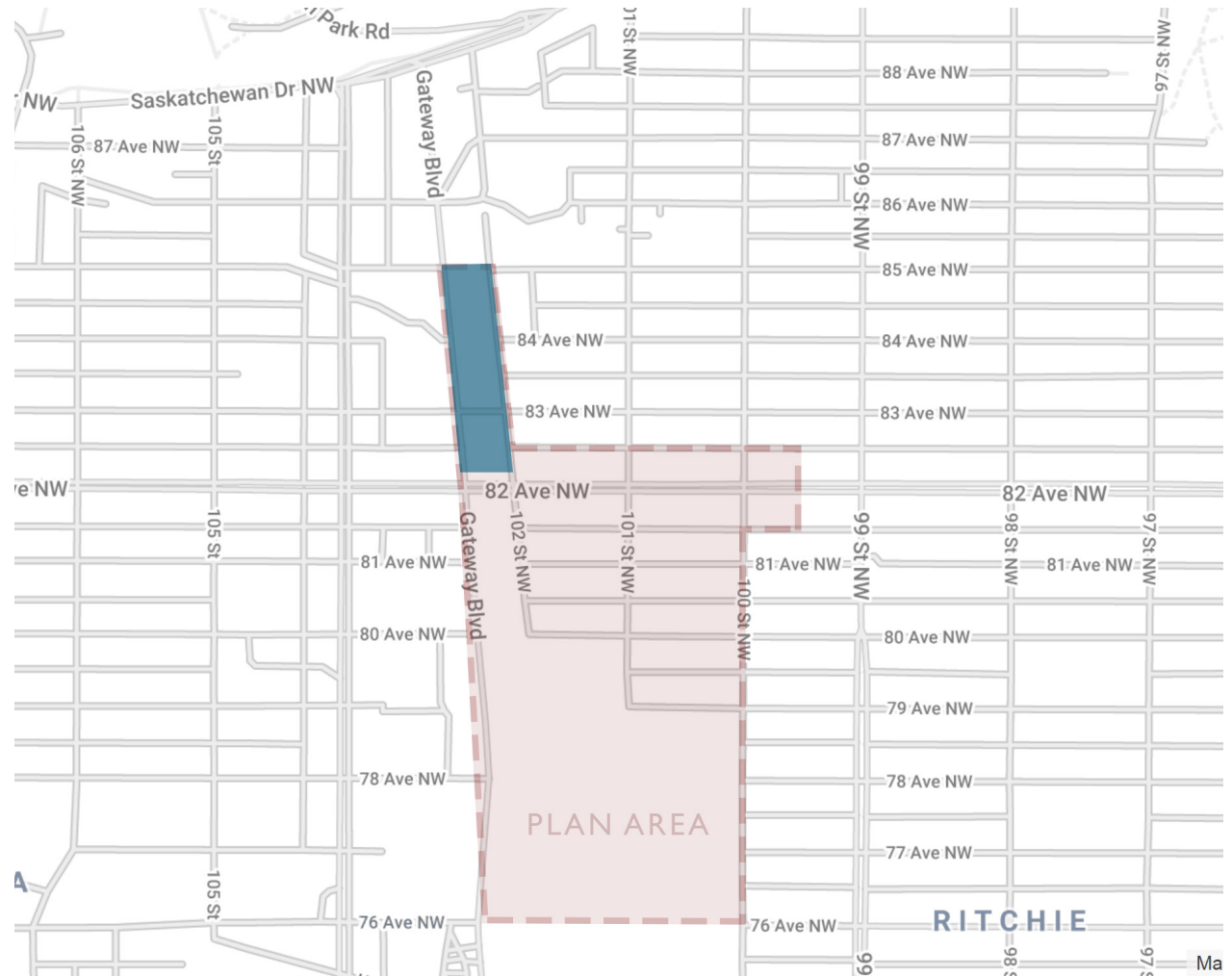


Figure 1.3: Lands north of Whyte Avenue

Plan Area

Land North of Whyte Avenue

83 Avenue acts as a barrier dividing the parcels, but features excellent cycling infrastructure. The parcel adjacent to Whyte Avenue features a public washroom, and will soon also include the High Level Bridge Streetcar's new terminus. Two projects that have large-scale concepts for the area are:

The High Level Line

A proposed 4.3 kilometre linear park including the existing streetcar and a new active transportation pathway. The concept proposes using the top deck of the High Level Bridge to connect Downtown Edmonton (from MacEwan University) to Old Strathcona (including a section of the provincially protected high speed rail corridor). The line terminates at the original Strathcona Pacific Railway Station.



Figure 1.4: A proposed “Aspen Forest” in the High Level Line (Credit: High Level Line Society)

The Prairie Sky Gondola

A proposed 3 kilometre urban gondola connecting Whyte Avenue, Rosssdale, and Downtown. The proposal features two stops in Old Strathcona. One stop at the End of Steel Park (outside the plan area) and another stop at the north edge of Whyte Avenue between Gateway Boulevard and 102 street. Additional stops are planned for Rosssdale (two near the historical Rosssdale Power Plant) and Downtown (located at ATB Tower).



Figure 1.5: Conceptual rendering of a proposed gondola station (Credit: Prairie Sky Gondola Inc.)

Plan Area

Whyte Avenue

The plan area includes a section of Whyte Avenue from Gateway Boulevard to 100 Street. There is a distinct difference in street character when crossing from the west side of Gateway Boulevard into the plan area. West of Gateway Boulevard, Whyte Avenue is defined by four storey heritage buildings with zero front setbacks creating a fine-grained continuous streetwall with a 1:1 ratio of building height to street width.

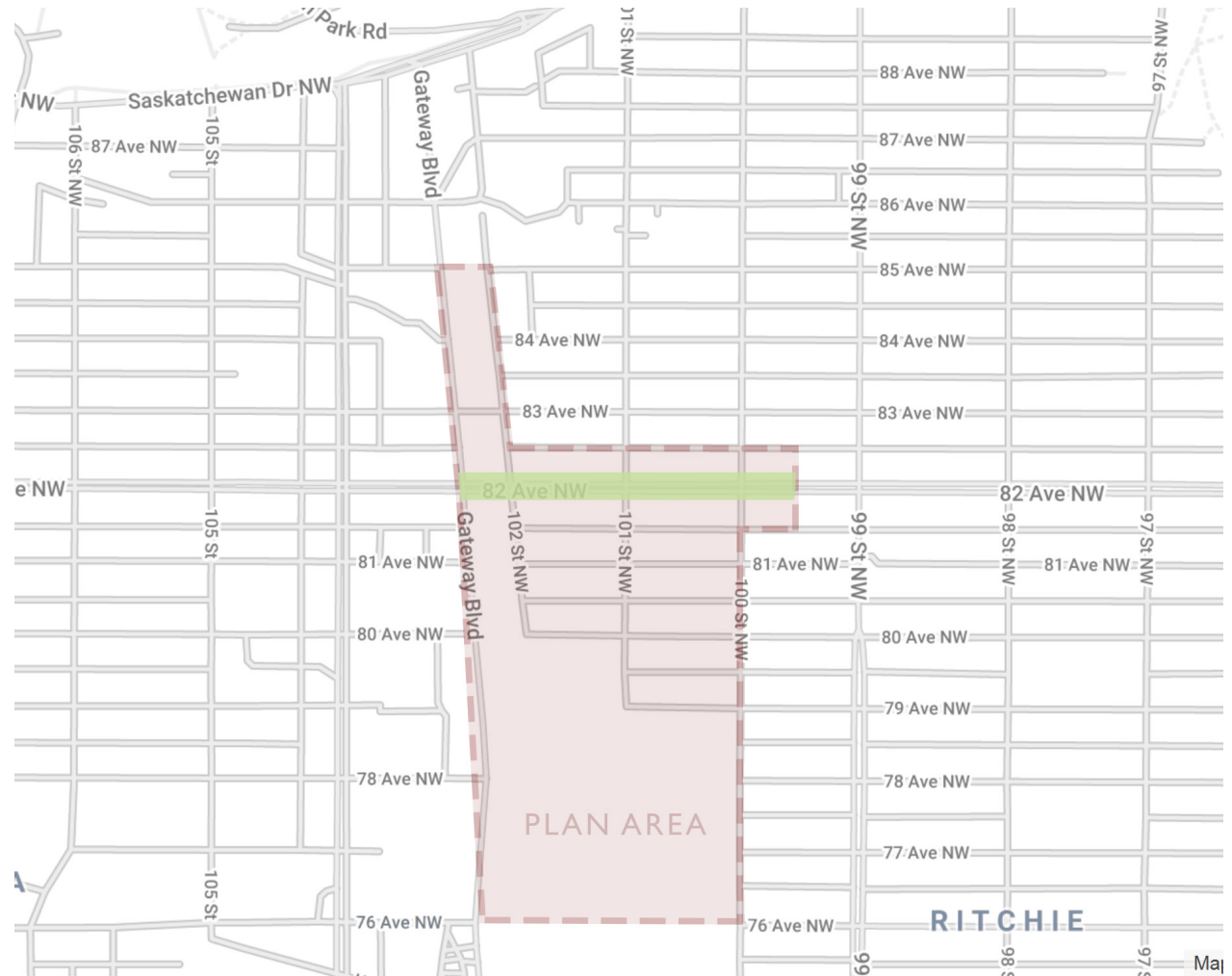


Figure 1.6: Whyte Avenue

Plan Area

Whyte Avenue

East of Gateway Boulevard, there is a discontinuation in Whyte Avenue's street character. Surface parking lots fragment the streetwall and the heights of many buildings are too low to create a comfortable pedestrian enclosure. Spanning its entire length from 109 Street to 99 Street, Whyte Avenue has an inadequate public realm for a main street. Sidewalks are too narrow to allow for businesses to spill into the public realm while also retaining large enough areas for walking, street furniture and activities.



Figure 1.7: Whyte Avenue, looking east from 102 Street (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 1.8: The Roots on Whyte building on 102 Street (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 1.9: The public washrooms on Whyte Avenue and Gateway Boulevard (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 1.10: Commercial storefronts on Whyte Avenue (Credit: Google Maps)

Sections

West Ritchie

West Ritchie is composed of a variety of uses including residential, commercial and light industrial. The section of West Ritchie included in the plan area is bounded by Whyte Avenue to the north, Gateway Boulevard to the west, 100 Street to the east and the CP Railway to the south. West Ritchie is defined by prominent buildings featuring boomtown false façades and a walkable street grid.

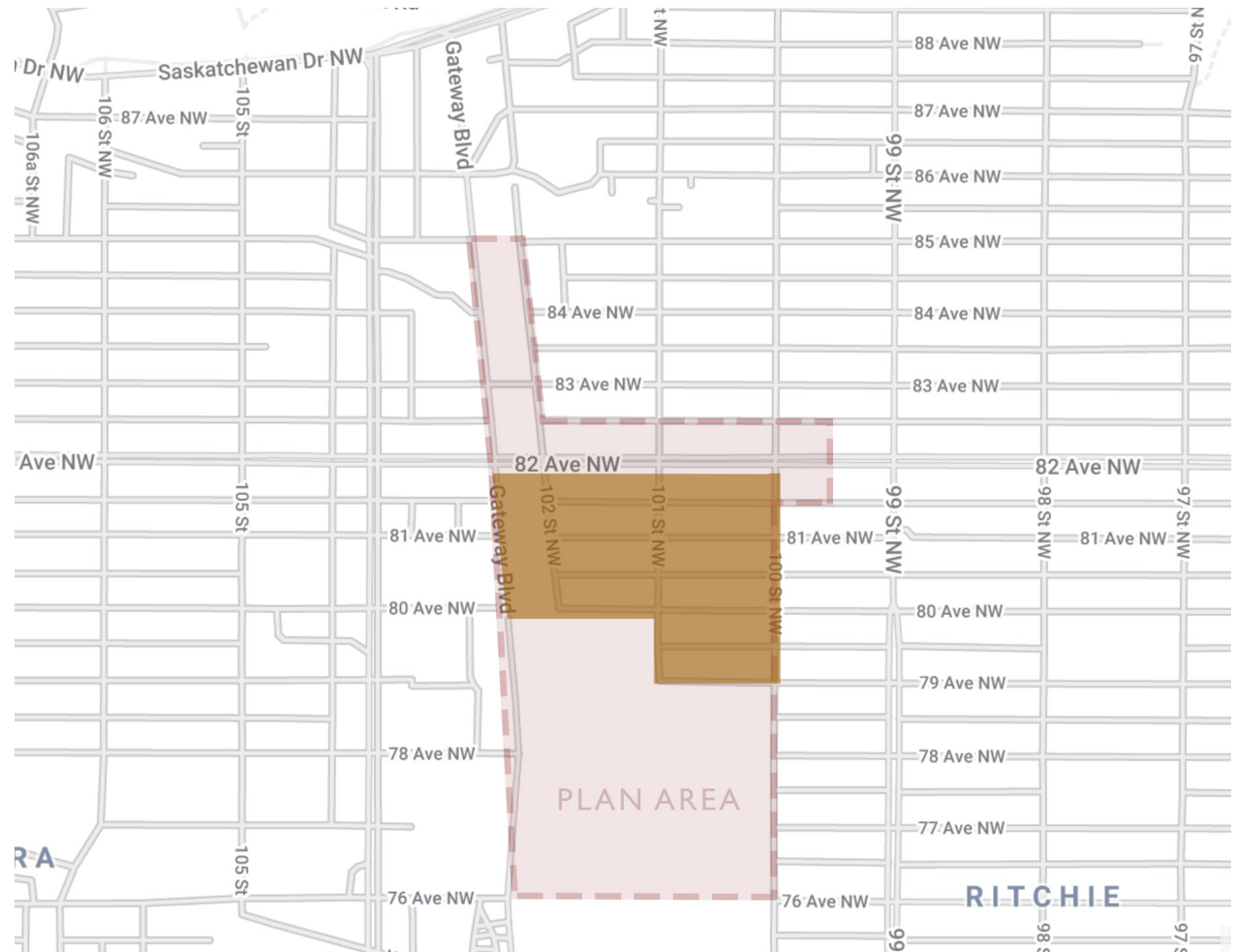


Figure 1.11: West Ritchie area

Sections

West Ritchie

Although many sidewalks have been improved with the construction of new developments, most other sidewalks remain in disrepair, or, are missing altogether. The poor state of the public realm can be attributed to a lack of an area identity. Building Great Neighbourhoods did not include West Ritchie in the scope for either the Strathcona or Ritchie Neighbourhood Renewal Projects. Inconsistencies with West Ritchie's identity by City administration are emphasized by the City's recognition that West Ritchie is a part of the greater Ritchie neighbourhood on its neighbourhood maps, but choosing to include West Ritchie in the *Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan* rather than the *Ritchie Area Redevelopment Plan*. This weakened identity has resulted in the area being overlooked for improvement projects and has contributed to a state of neglect.

Other notable challenges in the area include the obstruction of the Canadian Pacific Railway Station view on 81 Avenue and the community's perception of the Neighbour Centre, an outreach centre addressing the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty. Although the Neighbour Centre has submitted a development permit application to build an addition, however, after consulting with the West Ritchie community, they are considering other locations for expansion. See Appendix X for more information on the Neighbour Centre.



Figure 1.12: Commercial storefronts in West Ritchie (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 1.11: The boom-town influenced false facade aesthetic of West Ritchie (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 1.13: Ace Coffee Roasters in West Ritchie (Credit: Google Maps)

Sections

Canadian Pacific Railyard

The section of the Canadian Pacific Railyard included in the plan area is bounded by 76 Avenue to the south, West Ritchie to the north and east, and Gateway Boulevard to the west. The Railyard was created in 1891, but no longer features use by rail systems.

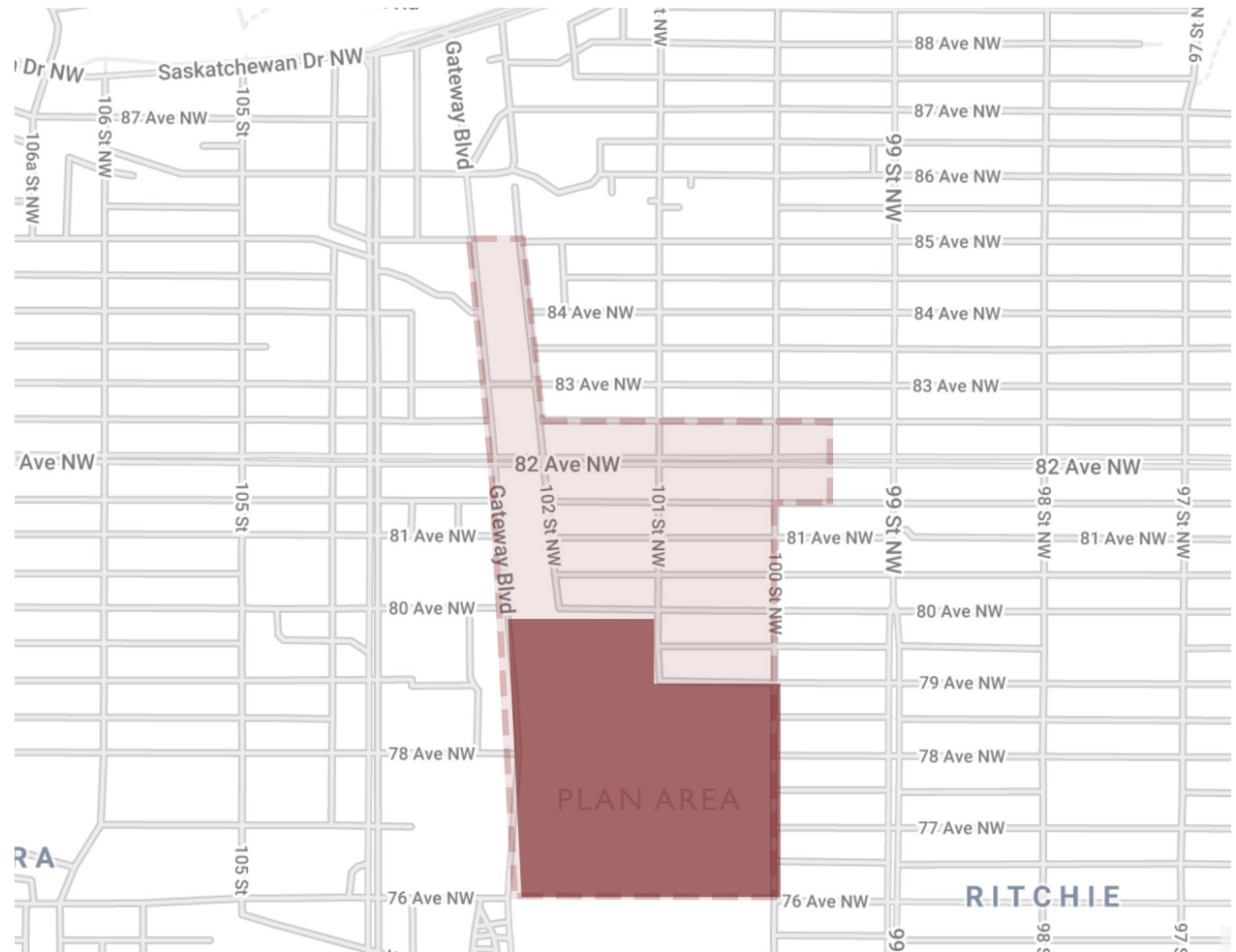


Figure 1.14: The Canadian Pacific Railyards

Sections

Canadian Pacific Railyard

Today, the area acts as a barrier, preventing the high volumes of traffic on Gateway Boulevard and 99 Street from moving east-west, and forcing drivers to use Whyte Avenue. The area contains part of the provincially protected high speed rail corridor that extends to Calgary.

In 2015, Canadian Pacific created a joint venture with the real estate company Dream Unlimited Corp. to develop more than 30 unused pieces of CP land across North America. At that time Canadian Pacific announced the Old Strathcona Railyard as “slated for development”. However, since 2015, there has been no updated status on development efforts, the condition of the land, or plans for remediation. As for existing opportunities, the Strathcona Roundhouse is a building on the inventory of Historical Resources that could be repurposed as a functional landmark.



Figure 1.15: The CP Railyard, operating in 1912 (Credit: City Museum Edmonton)



Figure 1.16: The CP Railyard, 1910 (Credit: City Museum Edmonton)



Figure 1.17: The vacant CP Railyard today (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 1.18: The stark difference between developed West Ritchie and the undeveloped CP Railyard (Credit: Google Maps)



Overview

planning context

Policy Alignment

The City Plan

Edmonton's municipal development plan is currently in a drafted format until it is ratified by City Council. *The Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* intentionally assists with achieving such targets from the *City Plan* as 50% of the trips in Edmonton eventually being made using transit and active transportation. The Plan supports the 6 *City Plan* Guiding Values by:

1.0 Belong

Empowering the community to come together with detailed placemaking initiatives, promoting active transportation by identifying opportunities for more infrastructure, requiring inclusive design, celebrating Gateway/West Ritchie's unique heritage and diversity, and identifying opportunities for the contributions of Indigenous peoples, culture and history.

2.0 Live

Requiring the activation of underutilized public spaces to improve perceptions of safety, encouraging the development of the CP Railyard to have a walkable grid street pattern and diverse housing, focusing on resiliency in public space design, and envisioning efficient mass transit along the Whyte Avenue corridor to support the area's walkability with more growth.

3.0 Thrive

Detailing placemaking initiatives and processes for the City to adopt that enable entrepreneurs to locate in the area, and encouraging the intensification of non-residential land.

4.0 Access

Prioritizing the reclamation of public space with the incorporation of universal design features, enhancing street design to improve connectivity, amenity space, and aesthetics, demanding convenient and safe pedestrian crossings at specific locations, and connecting the districts of University/Garneau, Downtown, Bonnie Doon through a diverse range of transportation options.

5.0 Preserve

Improving open space for health and enjoyment, promoting the implementation of wayfinding, enhancing significant cultural streetscapes, and recommending the creation of opportunities for traditional Indigenous connections to the land in the development of a linear park.

6.0 Create

Bolstering the community's capacity for placemaking by detailing tactical initiatives and advocacy opportunities.

Policy Alignment

The OSBA Strategic Plan (2019)

The *OSBA Strategic Plan (2019)* outlines 4 Strategic Goals, one of which provided the OSBA board with the specific direction to “work with partners on a plan to revitalize East Whyte”. This direction initiated the *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* and the Plan has ensured alignment with two OSBA strategic goals:

Strategic Goal 1: Strengthen the perception and reality of safety in the district.

Emphasizing the need, and opportunities, to improve the area’s walkability and pedestrian safety, detailing how to beautify the public realm through greenery, and recommending the expansion of the public realm along main streets.

Strategic Goal 3: Activate underutilized spaces.

Recreating laneways as walkable and safe public corridors, guiding future development of the CP Railyard, as well as the City surface parking lots adjacent to the Farmers’ Market, outlining how sidewalks and streetscapes can be improved through City processes, requiring the need for pop up events and vendors in underutilized areas, and giving instruction on various events that the Gateway/West Ritchie community can use to foster relationships.

Guiding Legislation

Planning Policies

Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan (Adopted 1998; Consolidated 2020)

The *Strathcona ARP* provides a long-term vision for the area's built environment and guides future development with specific objectives. Relevant goals and objectives for the Plan require the activation of an alley network, enhanced east-west connections, a multi-use north-south spine connecting Whyte Avenue to the River Valley, the universal design of all streets/alleys/open spaces, and a special study for the area between Gateway Boulevard and 102 Street.

Strathcona Junction Area Redevelopment Plan (2012)

The *Strathcona Junction ARP* seeks to guide revitalization and redevelopment of the Strathcona Junction area, and focuses on an effective transition from industrial use to commercial and residential uses. Relevant goals and objectives that were taken into consideration include protecting the provincially protected high speed rail corridor, retaining industries, improving pedestrian accessibility, establishing a grid with future development of the CP Railyard, incorporating cyclists on roadways, and providing east-west connections from Gateway Boulevard to 99 Street.

planWhyte Land Use Study (2017)

PlanWhyte was formed after a comprehensive analysis of Strathcona was completed in 2017. The plan identifies opportunities to improve livability and development in the area and, in February 2020, many of the recommendations from *planWhyte* are adopted into the *Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan*. As the project team was unable to ensure adequate public engagement due to time and resource constraints, the project team synthesized the results of *planWhyte*, which underwent extensive public engagement, to develop the Guiding Principles.

Guiding Legislation

Guidelines

Main Street Guidelines (2015)

Whyte Avenue from 109 Street to 99 Street is designated as a main street by the City of Edmonton, and 81 Avenue from 102 Street to 99 Street was identified as having main street attributes in both the project team's area analysis and the design charrette. The Plan compliments the *Main Street Guidelines* by outlining how citizens can advocate for an enhanced public realm through pilot projects without having to wait for the scheduled creation of a 'main street project framework' which will follow the completion of the Jasper Avenue and 109 Street improvement projects.

Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards (2018)

The *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards* (CSDCS) is a comprehensive living document for the design of new streets and improvement of existing ones. CSDCS seeks to create a network of multi-modal streets that enhance the unique characteristics of the neighbourhoods and districts they serve through universal design. The Plan uses the minimum specifications for the public realm of main streets outlined in the CSDCS to require improvements for Whyte Avenue and 81 Avenue.

Winter City Design Guidelines (2016)

The *Winter City Guidelines* is a tool that industry professionals can use to ensure public spaces are attractive and comfortable year-round. The Plan aligns with the Guidelines in its recommendations for more mid-block accessways, transitioning alleyways into business and pedestrian areas, taking advantage of sun exposure with the expansion of the Whyte Avenue's north-side public realm and creating defined north-south sunlit gateways, activating streets/urban parks/plazas, and requiring wider sidewalks and furnishing zones that help with snow storage in pedestrian priority areas.



Overview plan creation

Plan Creation

Overview

The *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* was developed in four phases. The phases were designed to facilitate a logical progression for the development of a public spaces and connectivity plan that builds on the engagement with community and urban design professionals. As the Plan focuses on community implementation, each phase responds to the outcomes of conversations with the community, and seeks to meet their needs for the public realm.

The four phases that led to the creation of the *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* are as follows:

- **Phase One: Visioning + Analysis**
- **Phase Two: Concept Development**
- **Phase Three: Gathering Input**
- **Phase Four: Plan Finalization**

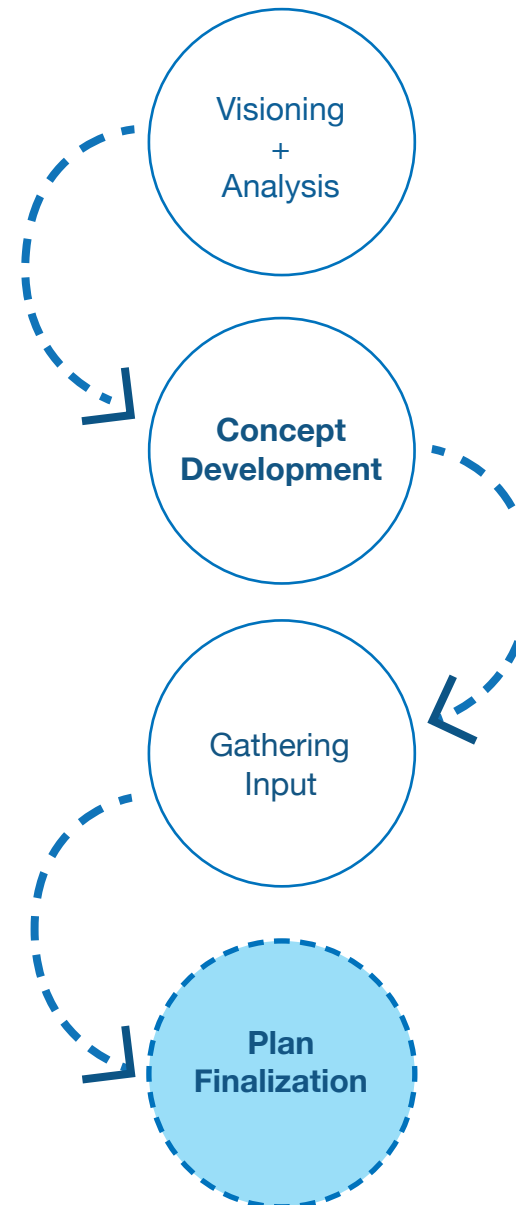


Figure 1.19: The Plan was created in 4 phases

Phase One

Visioning + Analysis

Phase One: Visioning and Analysis

consisted of the following outcomes:

Site Analysis

The project team made multiple site visits and analysed the site according to its mobility networks, building inventory, surrounding and internal nodes & corridors, and urban design. See Appendices A for a comprehensive review of the site analysis methodology and results.

SWOC Assessment

An assessment of the plan area's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and challenges, was generated through a brainstorming session

Review of Guiding Policies and Current Projects

Plans, guidelines and projects relevant to the plan area were reviewed and used to inform the creation of the Guiding Principles. For more information on guiding policies and current projects see

the sub sections Planning Context and Plan Area.

Guiding Principle Creation

An extensive analysis of the plan area, guiding policies, and current projects, led to the creation of 4 Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles informed the development of concepts at the design charrette and the further refinement of concepts into recommendations by the project team in Phase Two: Concept Development.

Targeted Meetings - Round I

Stakeholders with projects occurring in the plan area were targeted by the project team for one-on-one meetings. The meetings allowed the project team to learn about the stakeholder's concerns for the area and incorporate any impending large-scale changes into the Plan. Stakeholders included The City of Edmonton's Local Economy team,

the Grindstone Theatre, the Edmonton Radial Railway Society, and the Neighbour Centre. These conversations allowed the project team to start building relationships with the community and raise community awareness about the the Plan. See Appendices B for a summary of the meetings.

Design Charrette

A design charrette was hosted with a focus group of urban design professionals to collect expert opinions on the opportunities present within and surrounding the plan area. Alternative concepts were developed at the design charrette for the topics of mobility, built form and open space. See Appendices B for a detailed overview of the charrette and main themes.

Phases Two & Three

Concept Development & Gathering Input

Phase Two: Concept Development consisted of the following outcomes:

What We Heard Report

The alternative concepts generated at the design charrette were analyzed by the project team and distilled into main themes. A *What We Heard Report* was created to share the main theme findings with the charrette attendees and to inform them as to how their feedback would be used in the project's next steps. A copy of the *What We Heard Report* can be found in Appendices B.



Figure 1.20: The *What We Heard Report* outlines main themes from all phases of engagement

Preliminary Recommendations

A list of preliminary recommendations was formulated by the project team through a full-scale review of the opportunities identified in the site analysis, guiding policies, and design charrette. The recommendations were divided into long-term big moves, medium-term recommendations, and short-term strategies.



Figure 1.21: Recommendations were drafted through in depth analysis of engagement and analysis

Phase Three: Gathering Input consisted of the following outcomes:

Business Outreach: Canvassing and Survey

In an effort to build relationships and promote engagement at the scheduled Open House, the project team went door-to-door visiting businesses in West Ritchie. In addition to having in-person conversations about the public realm in Gateway/West Ritchie, the team was able to introduce themselves and the project, collect business contacts and send out an online survey. The survey was designed to gauge business owners' understanding of the public realm, determine what they see as opportunities and weaknesses in the area, ascertain which City incentives for business improvement they are familiar with, and what their capacity/desire is for improving the public realm with tactical urbanism. See Appendices B for a summary of the feedback collected.

Phase Four

Plan Finalization

Targeted Meetings - Round II

Stakeholders were identified throughout Phases One and Two as being integral in the progress of certain recommendations and strategies. These stakeholders were met with one-on-one to introduce relevant preliminary recommendations, collect their feedback, and invite them to the Open House.

Key Stakeholder Presentations

The project team presented to the Old Strathcona Area Community Council on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 and the project sponsor, the Old Strathcona Business Association, on Wednesday, March 11, 2020. The presentations were intended to give the two key stakeholder groups a summary of the project's progress by discussing the analysis of the site, the results of the design charrette, and the 4 preliminary Big Moves.

Open House Survey

In order to collect community feedback, and gain community buy-in for the plan, the project team organised a public Open House. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the Open House scheduled for March 14 was cancelled. The project team then turned the materials into an online survey. See Appendices B for the feedback collected.



Figure 1.22: The Public Open House was moved to an online survey to facilitate engagement remotely

Phase Four: Plan Finalization consisted of the following outcomes:

Final Report

The *Public Space, Public Life Plan* was drafted and finalized for implementation by the Old Strathcona Business Association.

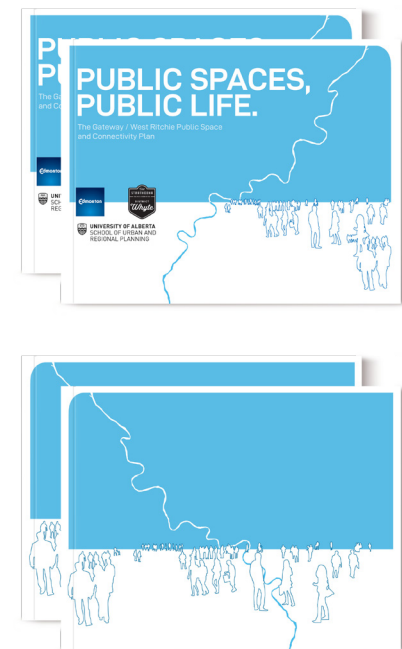


Figure 1.23: The Final Public Spaces, Public Life Plan



Overview

how the plan works

How to use the plan

Structure

Plan Overview

The *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* was created through a methodical phased process that entailed a review of relevant policies/projects and comprehensive site analysis. This section explains the reason the plan was initiated, the scope of the plan, and the factors that need to be considered in the implementation of the Plan.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles influenced the direction for the Plan, including the formulation of the Big Moves, Recommendations, and Strategies. This section outlines the project team’s approach in creating the Guiding Principles and suggests they continue to be referenced to guide future decisions during plan implementation.

Engagement

Multiple stakeholder meetings, presentations, workshops and other engagement methods were conducted to ensure the Plan aligned with best practice and community values. This section outlines those engagement strategies, and provides an overview of their methodology.

How to use the plan

Recommendations

Big Moves

The Big Moves outline long-term transformational changes to Gateway/West Ritchie that will have major impacts on public space and connectivity. The Big Moves require amendments to other plans and policies, land acquisition, design improvements, and meaningful engagement and partnerships.

The Big Moves present innovative projects that imagine a growth intensified, pedestrian-friendly, and sustainable Old Strathcona. Innovation and significant changes are challenges to pre-existing attitudes and opinions.

Recommendations

Recommendations outline medium-term strategies that have lasting impacts on public space and connectivity. Achieving a certain recommendation paves the way towards realizing one of the Big Moves. Recommendations require stakeholder collaboration and sustained advocacy to develop new programs, initiatives, funds, policies, and tactical projects.

The Recommendations outline how the community benefits, who needs to be involved to lead its successful implementation, and what steps need to be taken for the Recommendation to be attained.

Strategies

The Strategies outline short-term, actionable, low-cost initiatives that present the community with a place to start. The Strategies require a collective will to bring more people, activities, and vibrancy to the area as a way to shift perceptions and attitudes regarding public space and public life. Achieving Strategies will help complete one or several of the Recommendations.

The Strategies outline how the community benefits, who needs to be involved to lead its successful implementation, and what steps need to be taken for the Strategy to be accomplished.



Overview

guiding principles

Approach

Developing The Principles

The Guiding Principles provide the foundation for the *Public Spaces*, *Public Life Plan* and influenced all recommendations and concepts developed in the project. The *OSBA Strategic Plan (2019)* and the *planWhyte Land Use Study (2018)* were carefully evaluated in the formation of the Guiding Principles due to their recent completion, community engagement and long-term visioning for the area's community, businesses, and built environment.



Figure 1.24: The guiding principles build on previous work to create a thriving, resilient community

The *OSBA Strategic Plan (2019)* provides objectives that outline how the business community can work together to enhance economic development and placemaking in the Strathcona Business Improvement Area. The following objectives from the *OSBA Strategic Plan* were instrumental in developing Guiding Principles:

- strengthening the reality and perception of safety in the district;
- activating under-utilized spaces;
- and fostering a healthy and thriving business community.

The *planWhyte Land Use Study* defines goals and objectives for development, connection, built form, and design in the Old Strathcona area for the short and long-term. All six of *planWhyte*'s urban design strategies were instrumental for the Plan.

Objectives from *planWhyte* that were incorporated into the formation of the Guiding Principles include:

- establishing character districts;
- creating a pedestrian spine through whyte avenue corridor;
- improving active mode connectivity;
- strengthening public place;
- and improving pedestrian safety and access.

The four Guiding Principles in the Plan were strategically designed to provide a vision for Gateway/West Ritchie by directing growth and improvement for the next 20 years. Each Guiding Principle influenced the design of public engagement activities, the 20 year concept and the composition of recommendations and strategies.

Guiding Principles

Foundations of the Plan

ACTIVATE

“

Underutilized spaces are reimagined as valued destinations for people. Alleyways are reinvented as vibrant street spaces with greenery, art, and lighting.

”

CELEBRATE

“

Open space allows Edmontonians to celebrate their diversity year round with festivals and accessible activities. The history of Old Strathcona's railway and Edmonton's indigenous peoples is celebrated through placemaking.

”

CONNECT

“

Fine-grained, inclusive, multi-modal transportation networks and wayfinding, empower citizens to access, explore, and live/work within the area. Efficient connections define the area as a distinct place within the broader community.

”

PROSPER

“

The youthful and lively spirit of Gateway/West Ritchie encourages design that emphasizes sustainability, resilience, and innovation. Embracing a changing climate while supporting walkability and mixed use promotes the area's biodiversity, business, light industry and community.

”

Figure 1.25: The 4 Guiding Principles



ENGAGEMENT

overview

Approach

Engaging the community

Several engagement activities were completed to learn from the business community, community groups, neighbourhood residents, and urban design professionals. Recognizing the limited project timeline, the project team strategically engaged with the community to receive feedback at important project stages. Since the Plan could not achieve high levels of influence and commitment (as outlined in the *City of Edmonton’s Engagement Framework*, 2017), The Plan carefully followed the objectives of other plans and policies that underwent extensive community engagement.

With limited capacity for engagement, the project team created a calculated engagement plan that would maximize feedback collection. The Plan included the following engagement activities:

Phase One: Visioning + Analysis

Targeted Meetings - Round I
Design Charrette

Phase Three: Gathering Input

Business Outreach: Canvassing and Survey
Targeted Meetings - Round II
Key Stakeholder Presentations
Open House Survey

Timeline

Phases of engagement

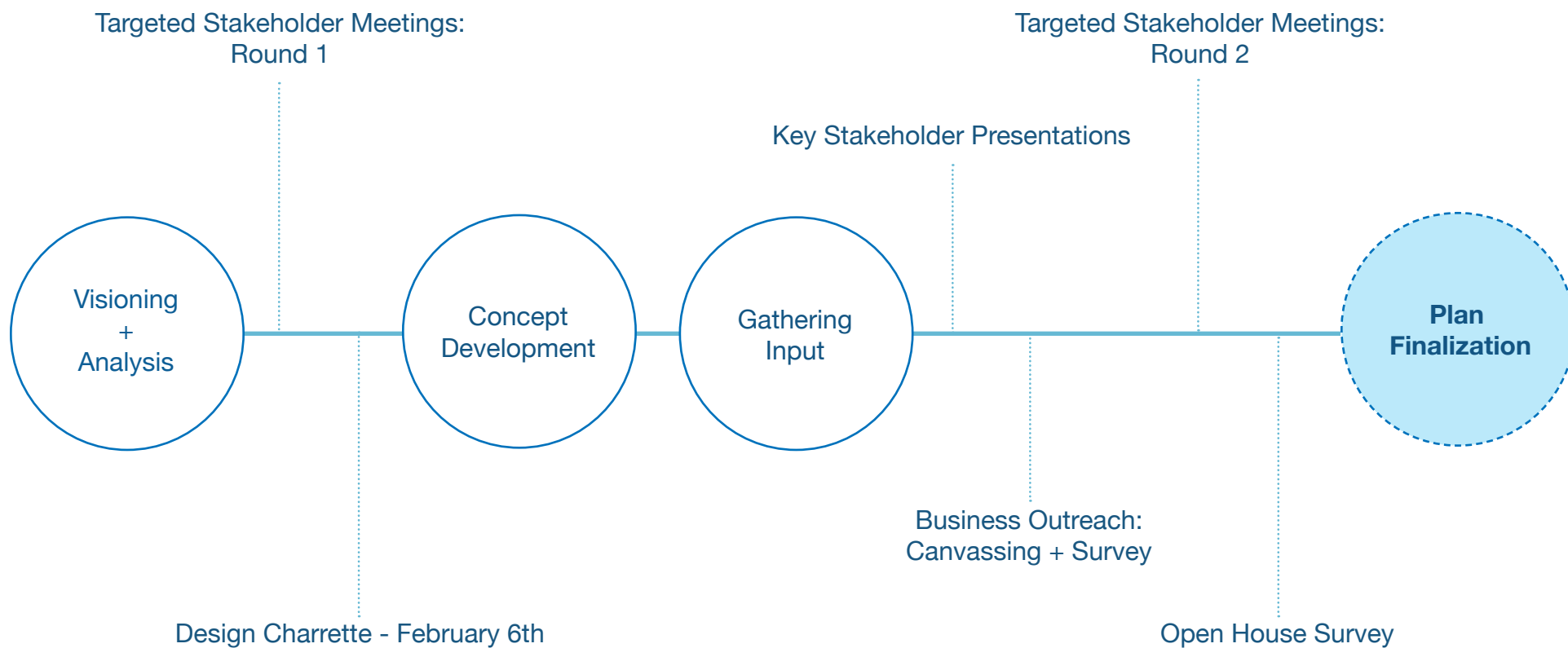


Figure 2.1: The timeline of engagement



ENGAGEMENT

round one

Targeted Meetings

Community + Stakeholders

The engagement activities in Phase One: Visioning + Analysis included targeted meetings and a design charrette. The feedback collected from this phase was synthesized to create a list of preliminary recommendations. The recommendations were divided into three categories: long-term Big Moves, medium-term Recommendations, and short-term Community Strategies.

Local Economy; City of Edmonton

The Local Economy is an administrative division of the City of Edmonton. The Local Economy division predominantly focuses on helping and supporting businesses through a variety of grants and incentives, programs, and advice to help Edmonton businesses thrive.

Additionally, the Local Economy facilitates the Storefront Improvement Grant, Development Incentive Grant, and Storefront Refresh Program. These programs cater to landowners, developers, and business owners who have property or buildings in the City of Edmonton's designated Business Improvement Areas (BIA). West Ritchie falls within the Old Strathcona BIA and is eligible for cash incentives to help create improved storefronts and spur new development.

The OSBA is interested in strategies for business improvement in West Ritchie and Strathcona. Meeting with Local Economy provided useful insights on how to improve the local economy of West Ritchie.

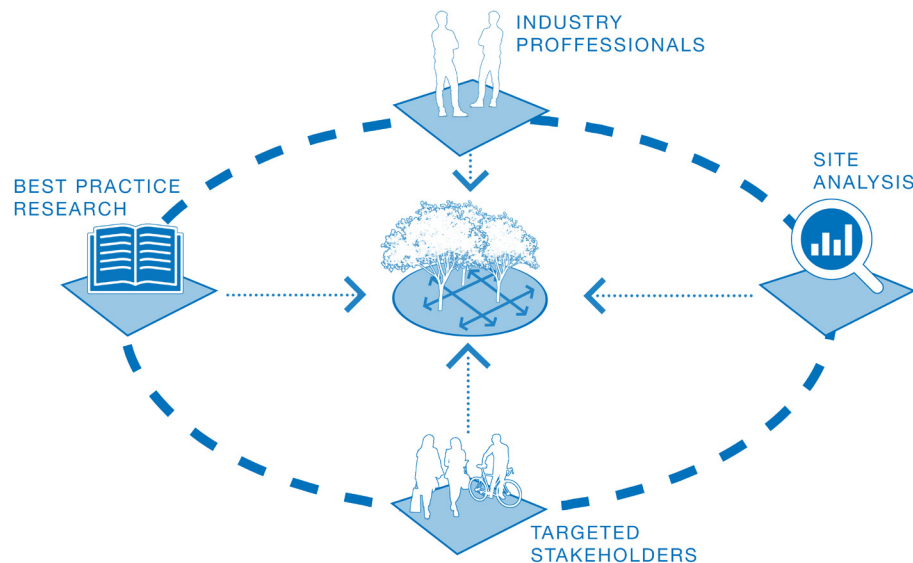


Figure 2.2: The plan encompasses stakeholder engagement, industry professionals, and best practice research as well as the project team's site analysis

Targeted Meetings

Community + Stakeholders

The Grindstone Theatre

Grindstone Theatre is a prominent Edmonton comedy club in West Ritchie that offers a wide array of comedy acts and classes to Edmontonians. The Grindstone Theatre has a specific business model to attract more people into the West Ritchie Community, and to establish themselves as a key driver of pedestrian traffic. The Grindstone Theatre's objective is to make West Ritchie more vibrant and the board was able to provide a unique perspective and valuable insight for the Plan.

The Grindstone Theatre was selected for a targeted meeting after it was mentioned by external resources that the Theatre is planning community block parties on 81 Avenue. Block parties are a great placemaking initiative, and the project team wanted to learn more about their progress and if, or how, it could be integrated into the Plan.

The Edmonton Radial Railway Society

The Edmonton Radial Railway Society (ERRS) is a volunteer organization that maintains and operates the two streetcar lines in Edmonton: the High Level Bridge line and the Fort Edmonton Park line.

ERRS was identified as a key stakeholder for the Plan due to the imminent southward extension of the High Level Bridge line into the site. The streetcar will extend 250m past its current location (behind the Arts Barn) crossing Gateway Boulevard and terminating at the north edge of Whyte Avenue between Gateway Boulevard and 102 Street.

To date, the organization has entered into an agreement with the Province of Alberta to lease part of the protected rail corridor, received a development permit, and has a building permit under review. In meeting with ERRS, the project team intended to learn more about the project, the concerns the organization has for the

built environment surrounding the new terminus, what kind of relationships they have with other proposed developments for the parcel, and what the future long term vision is for the streetcar.

Targeted Meetings

Community + Stakeholders

The Neighbour Centre

The Neighbour Centre has been an important community hub for individuals experiencing homelessness in Edmonton since 2012. The Mustard Seed partnered with the Neighbour Centre in 2016 to allow for a holistic set of drop-in services and programming for the centre's clients.

The Neighbour Centre offers four distinct programs that give it a unique and important role in serving the vulnerable population on the south-side of the river. This includes The Resource Centre (housing and employment consulting, health services, laundry services, community programs, etc), the Dinner Club (free meal service for clients), the Open Door Program (mentoring and spiritual care), and the clean team (part-time employment opportunities for clients).

The focus during the winter shifts to relief services, and includes a temporary shelter in the Trinity Lutheran Church with 70 beds. The Neighbour Centre would like to develop a system focused more on programming in the near-future and, soon, is seeking to expand their existing space to allow for the centres activities to be more efficiently organized. The Neighbour Centre was contacted for a targeted meeting due to their application for a development permit to build an addition at their current location. Further, the Neighbour Centre was also contacted to learn about how The Plan can respectfully include design and improved connections that help achieve the organization's vision and needs, and to recognize the important role the centre plays in the West Ritchie and Old Strathcona area.



Figure 2.3: The Neighbour Centre in West Ritchie

Design Charrette

Industry Professionals

A design charrette was hosted with a focus group of design and planning professionals to collect expert opinions on the opportunities present within and surrounding the site plan area. Representation from the City of Edmonton, Provincial Historical Board, Ritchie Community League, Strathcona Community League, and several architecture and design firms allowed for a robust discussion on the plan area's current context, existing challenges and future opportunities.

A What We Heard Report was created outlining the main themes from the design charrette and how the feedback would be used in the project's next steps. A copy of the What We Heard Report is located in Appendix X.

The following 3 questions guided the charrette discussion:

- How can the area be most efficiently connected within itself and to the River Valley, University, Downtown and Bonnie Doon?
- How can the area enhance public spaces, including alleyways, sidewalks, open space, and underutilized space?
- How can the built form be designed at a human-scale, and encourage meaningful interaction of people, businesses and activities?

Tables of 6-8 people were provided 20 minutes to cover each question separately and produce a design concept. At the end of each topic question, a table representative summarized the key discussion points from their table.

The design concepts produced were evaluated by the project team to produce a summary of key findings on each topic.

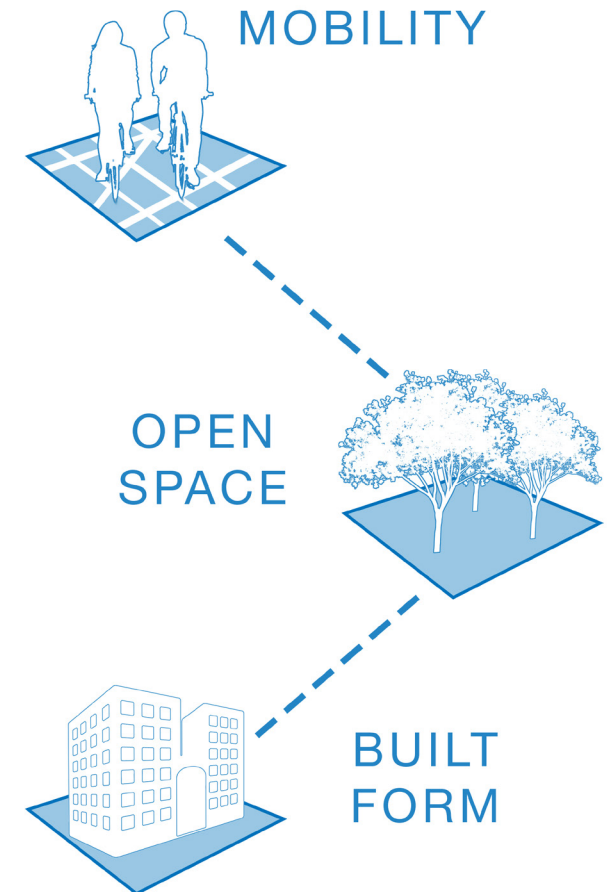


Figure 2.4: Three concepts were discussed during the charrette: mobility, open space, and built form



ENGAGEMENT

round two

Business Outreach + Open House

Canvassing + Survey

Business Outreach

To build relationships and promote the scheduled Open House, the project team went door-to-door visiting businesses in West Ritchie. The project team was able to introduce themselves, collect business information, and inform the businesses about the upcoming Open House.

Additionally, having in-person conversations about the attributes, downsides, and possible recommendations of the Plan gave further regarding the community's needs and desires.

A business outreach survey was also sent to businesses in the area as a way for them to provide further detail on the in-person conversations that were had. Simple questions were designed to reiterate questions asking which public realm elements need improving, have you participated in a local improvement program, and will you be coming to the Open House. Multiple responses were received from local businesses that gave considerable insight on perceived weaknesses and the most desirable improvements. Many recurring themes arose from the community members; see Appendices B for a summary of the feedback collected.

Open House Survey

In order to collect community feedback, and gain community buy-in for the plan, the project team organized a public Open House. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the Open House scheduled for March 14 was cancelled. The project team then turned the materials into an online survey. See Appendices B for a summary of the main themes collected through the survey.

Targeted Meetings

Round 2

Stakeholders were identified throughout Phases One and Two as being integral in the progress of certain recommendations and strategies. These stakeholders were met with one-on-one to introduce relevant preliminary recommendations, collect their feedback, and invite them to the Open House. A summary of themes from the conversations with the following stakeholders can be found in Appendices B.

Old Strathcona Farmers' Market

The Old Strathcona Farmers' Market is an anchor business for Old Strathcona during its Saturday operations. The project team identified the Farmers' Market as a change-agent that could lead the recommendation to transition 83 Avenue into a woonerf as well as lead the strategies to activate the City surface parking lots.



Trend Research

Trend Research is a local market research agency located in West Ritchie and an OSBA board member. The project team identified Trend Research as a business that had used local improvement incentives. A meeting was conducted to learn more about their experience and to ask if they had suggestions for improving City processes.



Targeted Meetings

Round 2

Gateway Renewal Project Team: City of Edmonton

The Gateway Renewal Project is a City of Edmonton led project with the intention of revitalizing Gateway Boulevard from 76 Avenue to 82 Avenue. Currently, the project's intention is to do road resurfacing from 76 Avenue to 80 Avenue and a combination of streetscape and public realm improvements from 80 Avenue to 82 Avenue. The project team determined that the renewal project could be an advocate for new East/ West connections within West Ritchie.

The Grindstone Theatre

Since The Grindstone Theatre was an eminent contributor to the initial phases of the *Public Space, Public Life Plan*, the project team believed that it would be valuable to have their opinions of the finalized Big Moves, Recommendations, and Community Strategies. Additionally, the project team identified that implementability of the community strategies was crucial for the plan's success; Recommendations and Community Strategies were introduced to the theatre to assess the Grindstone's capacity for their implementation.

The Strathcona Crime Beats Team

The Strathcona Crime Beats Team is a community division of the Edmonton Police Service. The targeted meeting with the Crime Beats Team was requested by a community business that wanted the project team to further learn about addressing safety and perception in the Gateway/West Ritchie and Old Strathcona community. The project team recognized the importance of public perception and knew it would be valuable to get the organization's opinion on the Recommendations and Community Strategies.



Targeted Meetings

Round 2

The project team presented to the Old Strathcona Area Community Council and the project sponsor, the Old Strathcona Business Association. The presentations were intended to give the two key stakeholder groups a summary of the project's progress by discussing the analysis of the site, the results of the design charrette, the 4 preliminary Big Moves, and the conceptual Design Recommendations. The summary of the themes that arose during the feedback periods of the presentations has been summarized in Appendices B

The Old Strathcona Area Community Council (OSACC)

The Old Strathcona Area Community Council consists of businesses and organizations that discuss issues involving the Strathcona Community. OSACC meets on a monthly bases and discusses topics such as neighbourhood events, community safety, and relationships throughout the community. The project team presented on the project's progress at the OSACC monthly meeting on March 10, 2020. The presentation was conducted verbally in a sharing circle format. Prior to the presentation, a project package including the site area, the site context, and preliminary recommendations was distributed to the members in attendance. After the presentation, council members expressed interest in receiving copies of the What We Heard report and attending the Open House.

The Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA)

The Old Strathcona Business Association, the Plan's sponsor, requested the project team do an interim presentation at a board meeting. In attendance was the OSBA executives and board members, many of whom are businesses within the Gateway/West Ritchie area. The project team prepared a visual presentation with a brief site area context, a list of the Big Moves, and preliminary Design Recommendations. After the presentation participants were asked to provide feedback, and opportunities and challenges were discussed.





Roadmap
concept

Master Concept

The Public Spaces, Public Life Plan



Figure 3.1: The Master Concept for Gateway/West Ritchie

Recommendations

Place + Program Based

Place-Based Recommendations

- ① Festival Plaza
- ② Station Park
- ③ Linear Park
- ④ 81 Avenue Main Street
- ⑤ Crosswalk Improvements
- ⑥ Whyte Avenue Public Realm
- ⑦ CP Railyards Development
- ⑧ Expanded Bike Network
- ⑨ 83 Avenue Woonerf
- ⑩ Multi-Modal Hub

Program-Based Recommendations

Placemaking Toolkit
 Placemaking Grant
 Greenery
 Parklets & Streeteries
 Neighbourhood Renewal
 West Ritchie Identity
 Wayfinding Strategy
 Street Furnishing

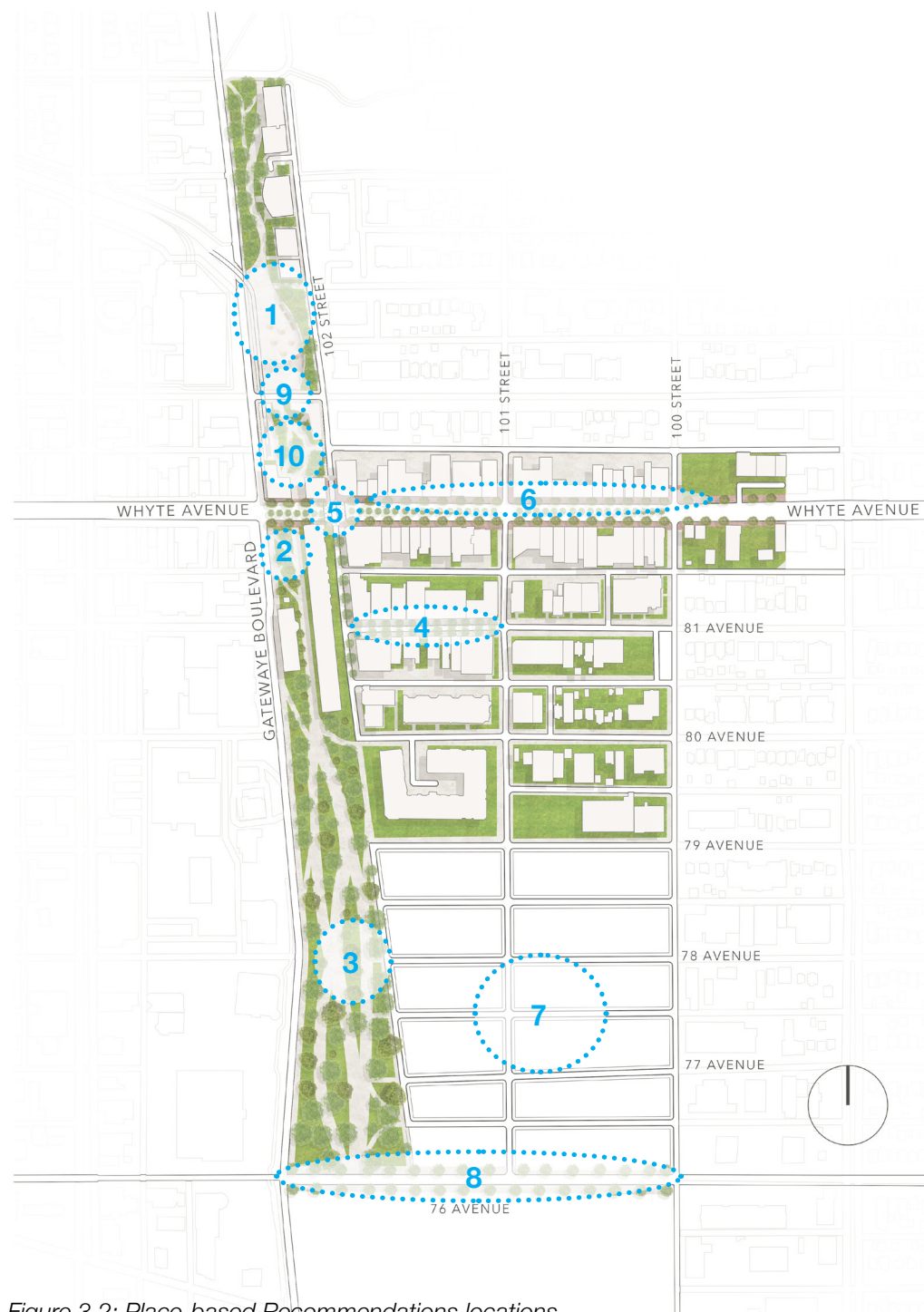


Figure 3.2: Place-based Recommendations locations



Roadmap
big moves

A Grand Boulevard

Big Move #1

A Grand Boulevard will follow the length of the provincially protected high speed rail corridor and connect north to Saskatchewan Drive (located between Gateway Boulevard and 102 Street). Old Strathcona needs a green spine to knit together the east and west districts, as well as the series of open spaces in Old Strathcona.

A Grand Boulevard will feature active uses to support vibrancy, and the health and wellness of residents and visitors. Green spaces, plazas, restaurants and cafes, retail and services, and multi use paths will make this a public space that people inhabit, and not just travel through.



Figure 3.3: The Grand Boulevard



Figure 3.4: East West connections

East-West Connections

Big Move #2

East and west connections will address the disconnection between Gateway Boulevard, West Ritchie, and Old Strathcona. Connection is key to driving more people into the area and have them experience more of Whyte Avenue. Allowing for permeability will help to establish Gateway/West Ritchie as a destination within the broader Old Strathcona area.

Gateway Boulevard, the CP Rail yards, and 99 Street to the east will also all can benefit tremendously from improved east and west connections. These areas will see active transportation thrive and Whyte Avenue's vibrancy continue eastward.

A Reclaimed Whyte Avenue

Big Move #3

A reclaimed Whyte Avenue means transforming the roadway into a transit priority corridor. This will allocate the space dedicated to parallel parking on the north and south sides of Whyte Avenue to pedestrians to support a public realm that can balance a mixture of activities, active transportation, street furniture, and people of all abilities.

Establishing an effective public realm and dedicating the roadway to transit, emergency and delivery vehicles will support local businesses, help the City meet the *Edmonton Declaration* commitments, increase pedestrian traffic, and attract new visitors into the area.

Reclaiming Whyte Avenue is a bold move that ensures Edmonton is proactively planning for intensification and carbon mitigation. For examples of other cities that have transitioned main streets to transit priority corridors, see the case studies for Toronto's King Street and San Francisco's Market Street in Appendices C.



Figure 3.5: A Reclaimed Whyte Avenue



CP Railyard

Big Move #4

The CP Railyard provides an exciting “blank canvas” for development to allow more people to live, work, and spend time close to Gateway/West Ritchie and Old Strathcona. The CP Railyard are privately owned, representing limitations on what type of development can happen.

Amending the *Strathcona Junction ARP* to guide development in the CP Railyard will ensure that as the land develops, it is done so in a way that aligns with the City’s strategic goals, the City Plan, and prioritizes public spaces and public life. This includes the need for a grid street structure, massing characteristics that are sympathetic to the surrounding communities, active transportation links, and public spaces that support thriving communities.



Figure 3.6: Development of the CP Railyards



Roadmap

place-based recommendations

Festival Plaza

Celebration Space

A landscaped public plaza utilizing the surface-level parking lot on Gateway Boulevard and 83 Avenue should be created with active uses and amenities, cultural and programmable elements, and designed to be usable for all ages and abilities. Provide a large amount of public gathering space to allow major events to occur in the community.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton

Big Moves:



Figure 3.7: Conceptual rendering of the Festival Plaza

Festival Plaza

Celebration Space

Why:

Public plazas act as an anchor for public life. Transforming the current surface-level parking lot into a public plaza will create both a social space for communities to come together, and act as an economic driver for development in the Gateway/West Ritchie area. Programmable space allows for festivals and gatherings that bring people from across the city to the area, resulting in increased economic growth. Active amenities will support vital public life and animate the space, while providing new economic opportunities for businesses.

The current surface-level parking lot is an inefficient use of land in a premier commercial district, and detracts from the vibrant public life that Gateway/West Ritchie seeks to create. By transforming the parking lot into a public space, new social and economic opportunities would be created for the business community and neighbourhood residents.

How:

The City of Edmonton should engage the OSBA, Old Strathcona Farmers' Market, and private and public stakeholders to develop the surface-level parking lot. Long-term lease agreements should be entered into with businesses supporting active uses in the plaza, and a management group should be created to oversee the operations and activation of the space. The plaza should feature a distinct image and identity compatible with the Gateway/West Ritchie identity.

Kickstarting this recommendation can begin with community strategies, such as Pavement-to-Plazas, which is outlined in detail in the Community Strategies section of this report.



Figure 3.8: Jones Plaza in Houston, Texas
(Credit: Rios Clementi Hale Studio)

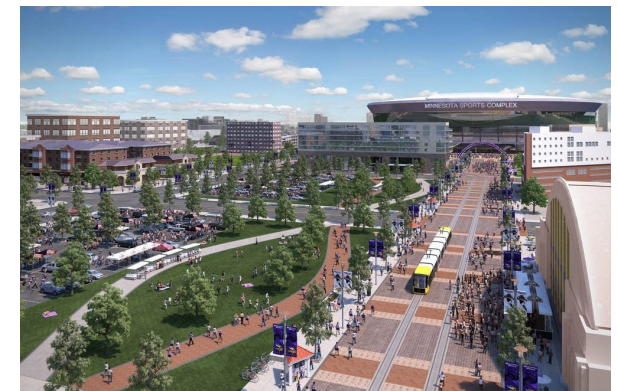


Figure 3.9: Stadium Plaza in Minneapolis, Minnesota
(Credit: Minnesota Vikings)

Station Park

A re-imagined community asset

The existing Station Park should be animated with thoughtful design elements that activate the space with reference to Edmonton's Indigenous Peoples and an environment that can offer the same use and enjoyment by anyone 8-80 years old. Designing the space so that it is accessible for anyone walking, wheeling or using active transportation in the area creates an atmosphere of leisure.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, Development Community

Big Moves:



Figure 3.10: Conceptual rendering of an updated Station Park

Station Park

A re-imagined community asset

Why:

Station Park has generated a negative perception from the community and area visitors. Poor lighting, infrequent traffic along the park, and lack of active and passive uses within the park has created an environment that feels unsafe and uninviting. Framed by the provincially protected high speed railway corridor, Gateway Boulevard, and Whyte Avenue, the park has been segmented from the energy and spirit of Whyte Avenue. Station Park has an opportunity to generate winter-friendly, active uses, and become a place where the entire community can celebrate.

The City of Edmonton is committed to the internationally recognized principles of Universal Design, which are founded on the philosophy that accessibility is a fundamental condition of good design. Station Park has an opportunity to serve as a benchmark for accessibility and include any Edmontonian without compromising their ability or enjoyment.

How:

The City of Edmonton should commit to capital investment in Station Park, with a park redesign project that uses universal design features. The City should work with the OSBA and Gateway/West Ritchie community to redesign the park with amenities and aspects that are valued and desired by the community, and integrate this design with the current identity of District Whyte.

To kickstart this process and gather community buy-in, community strategies such as Guerilla Gardening and Chair Bombing can be used.



Figure 3.11: Village of Yorkville Park in Toronto, Ontario (Credit: Peter Mauss/Esto)



Figure 3.12: Mid Main Park in Vancouver, British Columbia (Credit: HAPA Collective)

Linear Park

Facilitating connections

A linear park should be implemented with multi-modal pathways and connections that follow the provincially protected high speed rail corridor, from the northern “Festival Plaza” and continue south into the CP Railyard.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton

Big Moves:

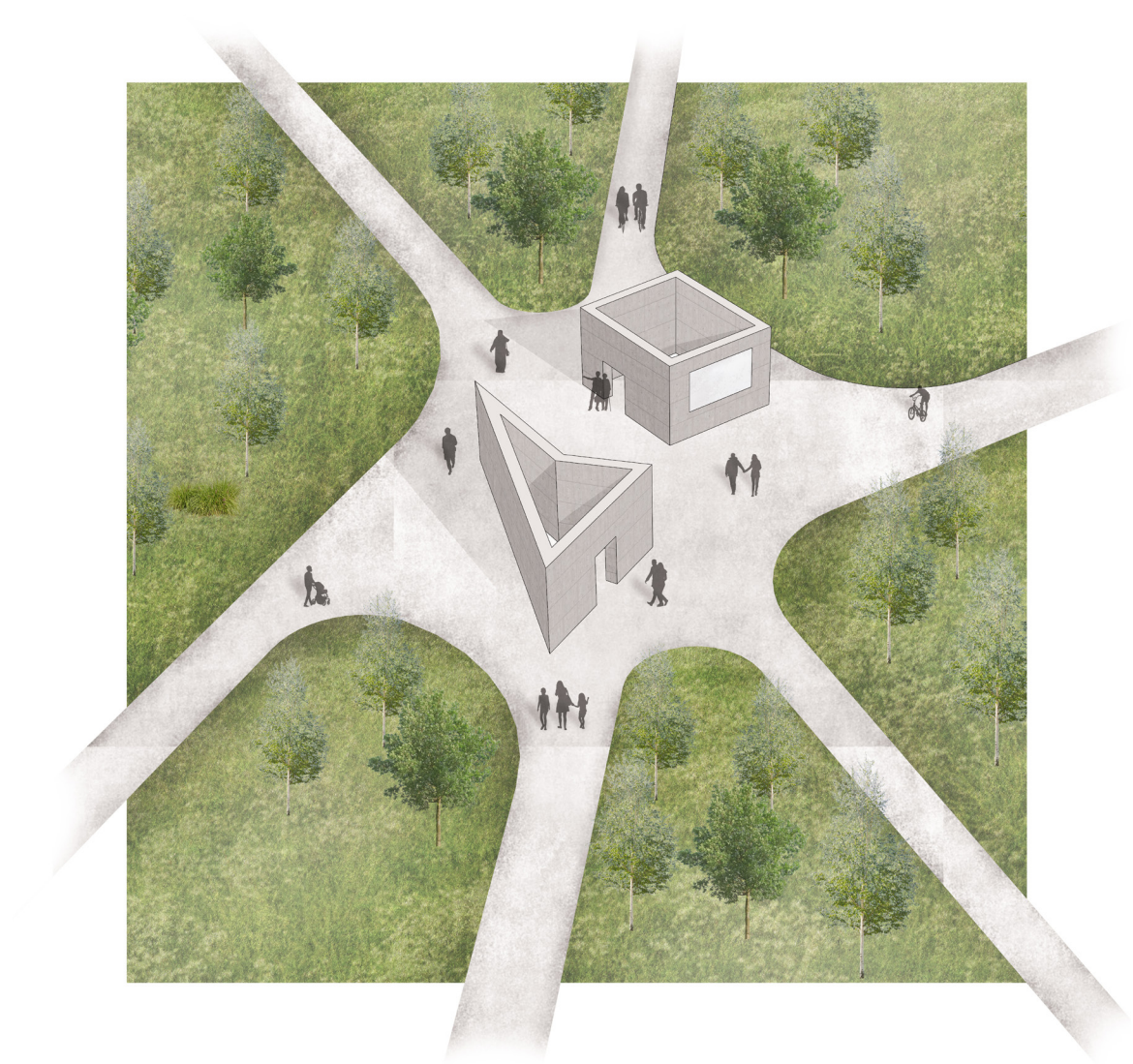


Figure 3.13: Conceptual rendering of the linear park system— active uses complement a multi-use path

Linear Park

Facilitating Connections

Why:

A linear park would provide a multi-modal corridor that knits together Gateway/West Ritchie and its surrounding communities. Linear parks create a sense of connectivity that traditional parks do not; they touch various social and cultural hubs and create a unique public space for residents of various communities to enjoy. Developing a linear park along the provincially protected high speed rail corridor would have physical and mental health benefits for community members, and economic benefits for the business community.

How:

The City of Edmonton should engage the Province of Alberta in occupying the Protected High Speed Rail Corridor. With the province's approval, the City should design and build a multi-modal linear park that stretches down the corridor, connecting to adjacent communities. The park should feature both active and passive uses, abundant greenery and edible vegetation, and active transportation infrastructure that will support future bike and e-scooter share programs. The design of the park should focus on naturalized elements and sustainable design, while creating “hot-spots” of active and passive activity along the linear park.



Figure 3.14: A water feature on the High Line Park in New York City (Credit: Curbed Magazine)



Figure 3.15: The 606, an abandoned rail-line turned linear park in Chicago, Illinois (Credit: Colin Hinkle)

81 Avenue Main Street

Driving growth in West Ritchie

81 Avenue should be recreated as a Main Street within the Gateway/West Ritchie community. This recreation would encourage development to follow the City of Edmonton's *Main Street Guidelines (2016)*. Recreation would entail updating the streetscape with more space for pedestrians and street furnishing, and provide the opportunity for commercial development to spill out onto the street to facilitate vibrant public life.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Business Community

Big Moves:



Figure 3.16: Proposed streetscape layout for 81 Avenue

81 Avenue Main Street

Driving growth in West Ritchie

Why:

81 Avenue already has a great mix of commercial businesses that feature a similar aesthetic. The light industrial boom-town theme influenced by false facades create a unique pedestrian experience on 81 Avenue. Currently, the streetscape is not pedestrian friendly. Building off of the momentum already created, recreating the streetscape layout would allow 81 Avenue to gain a larger presence and attract more visitors into Gateway/West Ritchie.

Encouraging future commercial development that can spill out on to the street would solidify 81 Avenue as a main street within Gateway/West Ritchie. The public life created by commercial storefronts and a unique pedestrian realm would draw visitors into Gateway/West Ritchie.

How:

The OSBA should advocate for more businesses to move to 81 Avenue. Specifically, businesses with commercial storefronts that are able to spill out on to the street or generate significant pedestrian traffic (restaurants, cafes, shops).

The OSBA should also engage the City of Edmonton to re-imagine the streetscape of 81 Avenue. This can be done through a neighborhood renewal program, or direct investment. 81 Avenue should be re-imagined with more space for pedestrians and outdoor activity, abundant greenery and street furnishings, and interesting materials. Zoning should emphasize the need to preserve the historic false facades that the area already features, and new development should capitalize on this aesthetic.

Kickstarting this recommendation can begin with community strategies such as Block Parties and Open Streets, outlined in the Community Strategies section of this report.



Figure 3.17: An example of the “false facade” architecture on 81 avenue (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 3.18: Bernard Avenue in Kelowna, British Columbia (Credit: Globe Guide)

Cross Walk Improvements

Keeping pedestrians safe

The safety and design of pedestrian crosswalks should be enhanced at locations along south-north connections between Old Strathcona and West Ritchie and at intersections in West Ritchie. Enhancement could be achieved by painting temporary crosswalks at intersections that are currently a safety concern for residents, and advocating with the City of Edmonton to provide permanent enhancements crosswalks in the plan area.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Neighbourhood Residents

Big Moves:

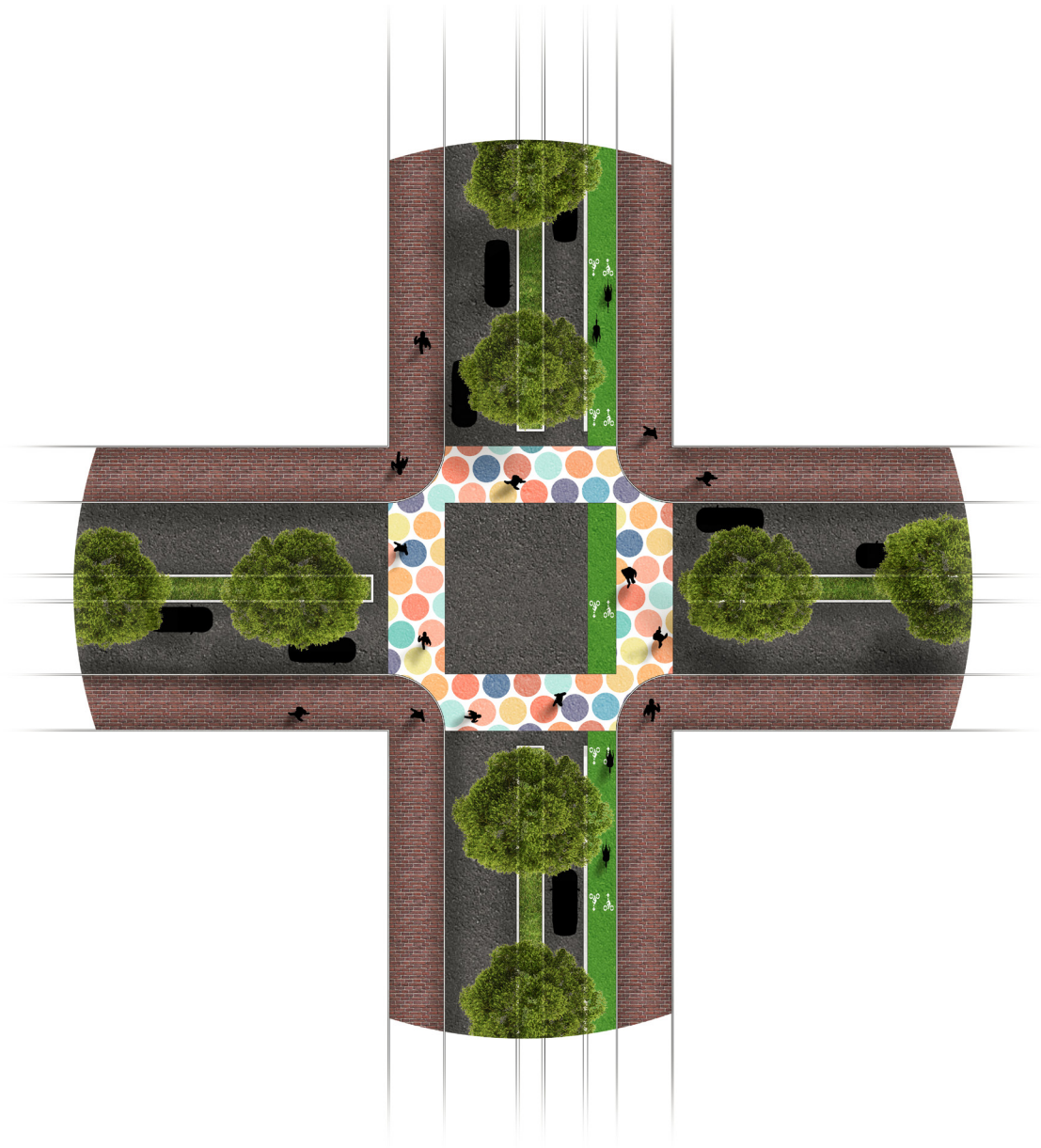


Figure 3.19: Conceptual rendering of an enhanced crosswalk with painted materials and increased space

Crosswalk Improvements

Keeping pedestrians safe

Why:

Crosswalk design can celebrate the shared value of the community, and punctuate visual connections between main street and residential destinations. Unique and visible crosswalk design enhances pedestrian safety, supports walkability, and encourages safe driver behaviour. Streetscaping improvements, including curb extensions and bulb outs, reduce crossing distances, making crossing safer for the elderly, small children, and everybody else.

Currently, the crosswalk at 102 Street and Whyte Avenue is not safe, with poor visibility and car-crowding. Enhancing this crosswalk, as well as others in the area, would improve connectivity and walkability, and keep pedestrians safe.

How:

Advocacy should be pursued for the City of Edmonton to develop a community crosswalk painting program. For an example of a municipality with a streamlined process for crosswalk improvement, see the case study for the City of Charlotte's "Paint to Pavement" program in Appendices C. The City of Charlotte's "Paint to Pavement" program allows neighbourhood associations, community organizations, and business groups to apply for a painted crosswalk and to receive financial support from the City.

Consider using the DIY Crosswalk Community Strategy outlined in the Community Strategies section of this report to kickstart this process.



Figure 3.20: An enhanced crosswalk in San Francisco, California (Credit: Getty Images)



Figure 3.21: A crosswalk in Baltimore, Maryland designed with local artists and schools (Credit: Graham Coreil-Allen)

Whyte Avenue Public Realm

Improving the community's largest asset

The sidewalk width on Whyte Avenue's north side should be expanded to meet the City's standards for main streets. North side expansion would take advantage of sun exposure, enhance public perceptions of the avenue, support walkability with well buffered street furniture, create a cohesive identity, provide the opportunity for larger bus shelters, and enable improved accessibility for the area.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA,
Community Leagues

Big Moves:



Figure 3.22: Proposed streetscape layout for Whyte Avenue with increased public realm

Whyte Avenue Public Realm

Improving the community's largest asset

Why:

Whyte Avenue is one of Edmonton's most vibrant streets and commercial districts. However, due to its narrow public realm, it does not compare to other famous national and international main streets that feature larger areas of public realm such as Berlin's Unter den Linden or Vancouver's Granville Street. Whyte Avenue from Gateway Boulevard to 99 street is hindered by a broken streewall and parking lots. An expanded public realm on the north side would stimulate this corridor with a cohesive identity, strong walkability, and opportunities for more street furniture.

The *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards (CSDCS)* (2018) is to be used in the design of "any new construction or rehabilitation projects that take place on a public road right-of-way" (as per Policy C573A). Whyte Avenue does not meet the City of Edmonton's requirements for Main Street Public Realm as outlined in the CSDCS.

How:

The City of Edmonton is able to provide direction for this transition in the creation of the Strathcona Public Places Plan. The Plan should identify the opportunity of Whyte Avenue's north side and require a pilot project that would provide an assessment for permanent improvement of the public realm and outline to what dimensions are needed.

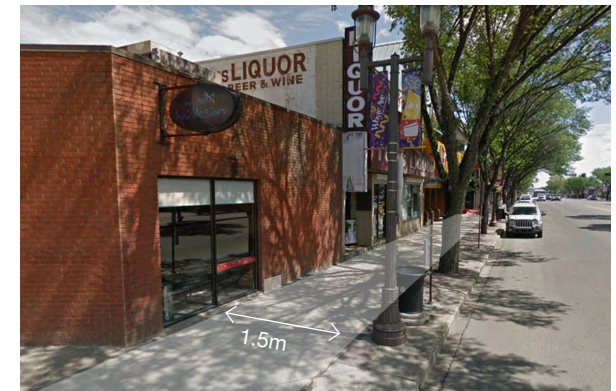


Figure 3.23: Whyte Avenue only has a pedestrian through zone of 1.5m (Credit: Google Maps)



Figure 3.24: Edmonton's main street guidelines require at least a 3m pedestrian through zone (Main Street Guidelines, 2016)

CP Railyard Development

Guiding quality urban design

A holistic plan for the future development of the CP Railyard should be created with a focus on east/west connections and appropriate infill. Amending the existing *Strathcona Junction ARP* would establish the appropriate development of the CP Railyard and ensure that it falls within the strategic goals of the *CityPlan*.

Leaders:
The City of Edmonton

Big Moves:

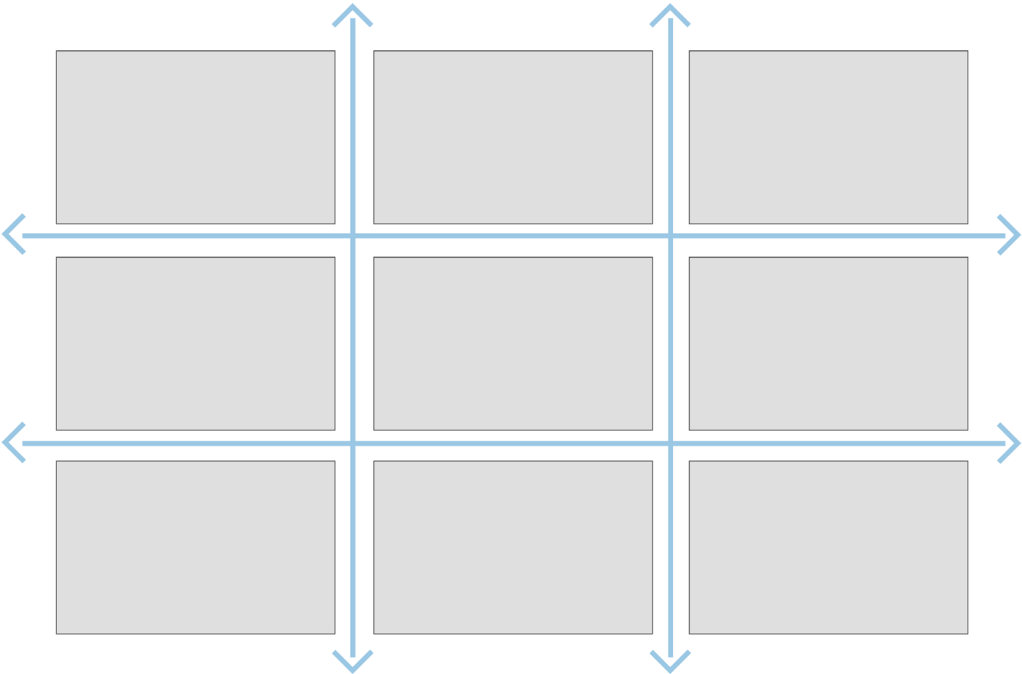


Figure 3.25:

CP Railyards Development

Guiding quality urban design

Why:

Amending the Strathcona Junction ARP is needed to ensure the land develops in alignment with the City of Edmonton's strategic goals, the *CityPlan*, and to encourage design for strong public spaces and public life.

How:

The City of Edmonton should produce amendments to the Strathcona Junction ARP that aligns with the City's vision for the next 25 - 30 years. Amendments should include the requirement for a grid street structure, development that is sympathetic to the greater Old Strathcona community, and green space allocations to allow for the continuation of the Linear Park.



Figure 3.26: The plan for the Regina Railyards, a railyard renewal project in Regina, Saskatchewan (Credit: Urban Strategies)

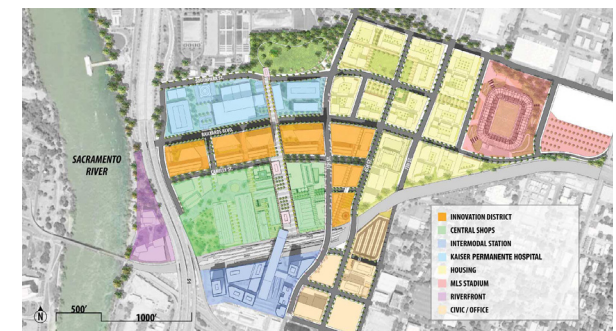


Figure 3.27: The plan for The Railyards, another railyard renewal project in Sacramento, California (Credit: Urban Strategies)

Expanded Bike Network

Two-wheeled connections

The Southside Bike Grid should be expanded to allow for efficient, safe connections from West Ritchie to the 83 Avenue separated bike lane, the River Valley and the Bonnie Doon LRT station through the expansion of separated bike infrastructure.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, Bicycle Advocacy Organizations, OSBA

Big Moves:



Figure 3.28: Proposed bike network expansion for Gateway/West Ritchie

Expanded Bike Network

Two-wheeled connections

Why:

Allowing for multi-modal transportation options such as cycling increases the plan area's vibrancy, walkability, and safety. Sidewalks become buffered from private vehicles when bike lanes are installed adjacent to them. Street buffering enhances the pedestrian's level of comfort for using the sidewalks and overall safety is improved when private vehicle drivers choose to drive at slower speeds due to increased outdoor activity and narrower driving lanes.

How:

The City of Edmonton is currently creating an all encompassing City Bike Plan and advocacy should be pursued to encourage the City to:

- add a bike lane at 102 Street (from Saskatchewan Drive to the this plan's proposed 80 Avenue east-west multi-use path);
- continue the separated bike lane on 100 Street (from 83 Avenue to 76 Avenue);
- and continue the separated bike infrastructure on 76 Avenue through the CP Railyard linking up with the existing separated bike lane on the west side of Gateway Boulevard.

The community can initiate this infrastructure through the implementation of temporary bike lanes, outlined in the Community Strategies section of this report.



Figure 3.29: The 83 avenue protected bike lanes (Credit: The Star)



Figure 3.30: Protected bike lanes in downtown Edmonton (Credit: The City of Edmonton)

83 Avenue Woonerf

Streets for people

A local access only woonerf should be created to prioritize pedestrians, cyclists and outdoor public activities along 83 Avenue, from Calgary Trail to 102 Street. A “woonerf” is a Dutch concept that recreates roadways as “living streets” accommodating pedestrians, cyclists, activities and slow moving private vehicles (15km/hr).

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, Old Strathcona Farmers’ Market, OSBA

Big Moves:



Figure 3.31: Conceptual rendering of 83 Avenue, activated as a people-first space

83 Avenue Woonerf

Streets for people

Why:

The Old Strathcona Farmers' Market is an anchor activity for the area, however, this activity is mainly limited to being inside the building as public plaza space is limited and private vehicle activity surrounding the area acts as a barrier to outside seating/activities and exploration of the broader neighbourhoods. During its Saturday operations, the Farmers' Market receives complaints from cyclists that there is improper use and damage occurring to the bike lanes as vendor vehicles use the bike lanes in an effort to leave the roadway unhindered. Surrounding businesses are encumbered by market goers assuming they are closed and using their parking spaces.

By permanently transitioning 83 Avenue to local access from Calgary Trail to 102 Street, investment in the Strathcona Back Street would be bolstered, the future expansion of the Farmers' Market's would be supported, spillover of market goers into West Ritchie would be facilitated, and an inexpensive public plaza would be created for one of Strathcona's most vibrant public venues. For examples of similar projects, see the case studies for Seattle's Bell Street Park and Atlanta's Broad Street Boardwalk in Appendices C.



Figure 3.32: The Broad Street Boardwalk in Atlanta, Georgie (Credit: The City of Atlanta)

How:

The City of Edmonton would limit the amount of private vehicles accessing the street by:

- preventing private vehicle access from/to Gateway Boulevard;
- allowing vendor vehicles access to the Market from Gateway Boulevard;
- installing “Local Access Only” signage;
- installing road material that differentiates the street from typical roadways;
- removing the curb so that pedestrians are invited to use the full roadway;
- providing moveable street furniture (chairs, tables, oversized games);
- and maintaining the space in the winter and allowing for winter activities (i.e. fire pits, the sale of winter delicacies like mulled wine, etc.)

Multi-Modal Hub

Integrating transit development

A multi-modal transportation hub should be designed with active uses on the city-owned parcel of land at the corner of Gateway Boulevard and Whyte Avenue. Coordinate with the High Level Line Society, Prairie Sky Gondola, and The Edmonton Radial Railway Society to create an integrated development plan.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, Business Community

Big Moves:

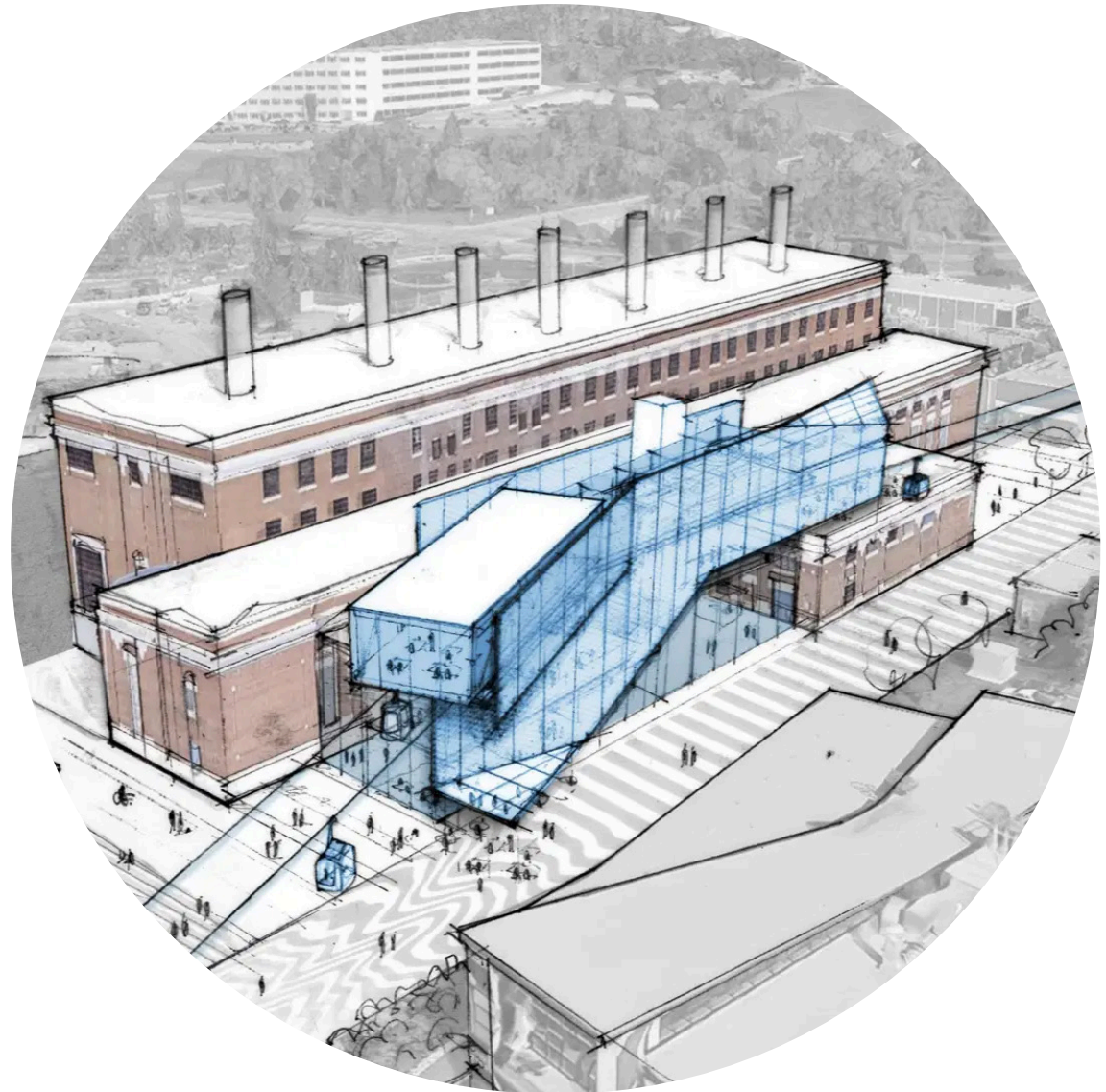


Figure 3.33: Conceptual rendering of a multi-modal hub at the Rossdale Powerplant (Credit: Prairie Sky Gondola)

Multi-Modal Hub

Integrating transit development

Why:

There are currently three private projects that culminate on the City-owned parcel of land located on the north edge of Whyte Avenue between Gateway Boulevard and 102 Street: the Prairie Sky Gondola, High Level Line, and the High Level StreetCar Extension. Integrating these proposals into a multi-modal transit hub would maximize the land use, provide cost-sharing opportunities as businesses share similar models, and provide a central hub for three distinct and unique transportation options. A gondola and streetcar station, as well as an active transportation corridor provided by the High Level Line and Linear Park would build off of each other and provide vital connections from Gateway/West Ritchie to the greater City of Edmonton.

How:

The City of Edmonton should engage with all three parties to design and build a succinct concept for the parcel of land, while retaining ownership. Long term lease agreements will allow private development the flexibility they require while ensuring that the parcel is designed and developed in a way that compliments all three proposals. Architecture and amenities should compliment each other, and provide an identity that promotes the City's transportation brand while maintaining each individual proposal's identity. Active uses and public washrooms will need to be included in any buildings on the site to serve the community and activate the space.



Figure 3.34: A proposed gondola station and plaza in Oakland, California (Credit: BIG)



Figure 3.35: A proposed transit hub with a streetcar station, bus terminal, and public plaza in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Credit: City of Milwaukee)



Roadmap
program-based

Placemaking Toolkit

A toolkit for community building

A Placemaking Toolkit should be created for West Ritchie and Old Strathcona to serve as a practical guide for business members and community members to implement placemaking initiatives. The Toolkit would help the community navigate available resources, grants and incentives, regulatory processes, and community partnerships to build community and create better places.

Leaders:

OSBA, Neighbourhood Residents, Business Community

Big Moves:



Figure 3.36: Conceptual placemaking guide with step-by-step directions

Placemaking Toolkit

A toolkit for community building

Why:

Creation of a toolkit would provide a detailed framework for implementable strategies to create a lively, desirable community. Community initiatives will be accomplishable, vary in scale, and outline the stakeholder groups best equipped to lead the implementation.

Examples of community strategies include guerilla gardening, (Park)ing Day, and Pop-up Art Exhibits. The goal of the Placemaking Toolkit would be the provision of a step-by-step process for anyone who wants to accomplish a placemaking initiative, or would like to see improvement in their community. Often these short term, temporary solutions lead to more permanent solutions as described in the guerilla wayfinding solution in Raleigh, North Carolina (Appendix C).

How:

The OSBA can partner with the business community and target desirable placemaking initiatives that will entice increased pedestrian activity in the neighbourhood, like Popup Art Exhibits and Block Parties. A variety of the Placemaking Tools can be chosen from the Community Strategies section in this report. These placemaking strategies will reflect themes it will achieve, like creating an identity for the area or establishing a better connection into West Ritchie. All community strategies will identify a leadership group, the scale of the project, and a breakdown of how to achieve it.



Figure 3.37: The Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit by AARP (Credit: AARP)



Figure 3.37: A creative placemaking initiative that utilized the AARP Toolkit (Credit: AARP)

Placemaking Grant

Funding public life

The existing Storefront Refresh Program should be amended to allow a wider range of eligible claimable items. Include eligible placemaking events like block parties, parklets, street furniture, and patios, or allow the grant to be open and allocate funds on a project-by-project basis, projects general intent must to make their community more lively and vibrant.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton

Big Moves:



Figure 3.38: The placemaking grant should be easily accessible through the City's webpage

Placemaking Grant

Funding public life

Why:

Currently, the Storefront Refresh Program is an opportunity for business owners to get a \$1000 dollar cash grant for minor improvements to their storefront (i.e. awning repair, pressure washing, planters, etc). By extending the list of claimable items, the business community would be more encouraged to participate in the Storefront Refresh Program. By opening up the grant to initiatives like Block Parties, Chair Bombing, and Crosswalk Painting would allow for community activists, the business community, and the OSBA to participate in these community initiatives that are desirable and create lively public places.

How:

Businesses and the OSBA can advocate for the City of Edmonton to amend the current Storefront Refresh Program to allow for a wider range of items to be claimed for. Within the processes, the City of Edmonton has to be cognizant that the grant application has to be simple and easy for the applicant, it cannot be too demanding as this will be intimidating and undesirable.

Under provision 3.2.1.3 of the *CityPlan*, placemaking initiatives are encouraged to align with renewal projects. Amending the grant would align with the new City vision outlined in the *CityPlan*.



Figure 3.39: A placemaking initiative funded by a grant program in Halifax. (Credit: Halifax Regional Municipality)



Figure 3.40: A pop-up park funded by a grant program in Atlanta, Georgia. (Credit: Project for Public Spaces)

Greenery

Reclaiming nature

The amount of planted trees, edible plants, and other greenery in existing and future open spaces, and along pedestrian right-of-ways should be increased to create welcoming public spaces. The thoughtful placement of greenery, such as next to existing street furniture or along pedestrian thoroughfares, should be encouraged. Enhanced greenery can help reflect Edmonton's pride in its River Valley and Indigenous culture.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Community Leagues, Neighbourhood Residents, Business Community

Big Moves:



Figure 3.41: Conceptual rendering of a shared use path utilizing abundant green features

Greenery

Reclaiming Nature

Why:

Green space exposure is positively associated with improved mental health and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease. Green spaces with trees, flowers, and shrubs in commercial settings have been shown to provide psychological relaxation, reduce stress, and support social cohesion.

Street trees, when planted close together, reduce heat by providing shade, help purify air, and provide a buffer from traffic and noise. Friends of Trees is a community initiative, founded in Portland, Oregon in 1989 boasting over 800,000 trees planting in the Portland Region (see Appendix C). Community building has been the stepping stone of the initiative as volunteer labour is sourced from the neighbourhood.

How:

Community organizations and local indigenous groups should be partnered with to identify greenery and other design elements (i.e. tree grates) that reflect the activities and environment prior to urbanization.

Local planting initiatives and increased street tree planting and plant boxes along 81 Avenue should be encouraged. Local wholesale tree farmers can provide trees, resources can be donated to the neighbourhood, and volunteer labour can be sourced from the neighbourhood.

The City of Edmonton should create a Parks and Open Space Levy for community groups to initiative green space projects in business improvement areas. Projects can be for existing open spaces (upgrading lighting, pathway widening). Since 2009, the City of Seattle has awarded funding for community-initiated open space projects through a dedicated green space levy and a matching fund. (See Appendices C)



Figure 3.42: Green neighborhood design in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. (Credit: Perkins & Will)



Figure 3.43: South Park in San Francisco. (Credit: Fletcher Studio)

Parklets & Streeteries

From parking to people

The permitting and creation of parklets (small segments of the right-of-way that are converted from automobile parking space to public space) and streeteries (outdoor cafes located in a parking lane) should be streamlined. This would allow Gateway/West Ritchie and Whyte Avenue to cost-effectively expand the public realm with infrastructure and entrepreneurial activity.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Business Community

Big Moves:

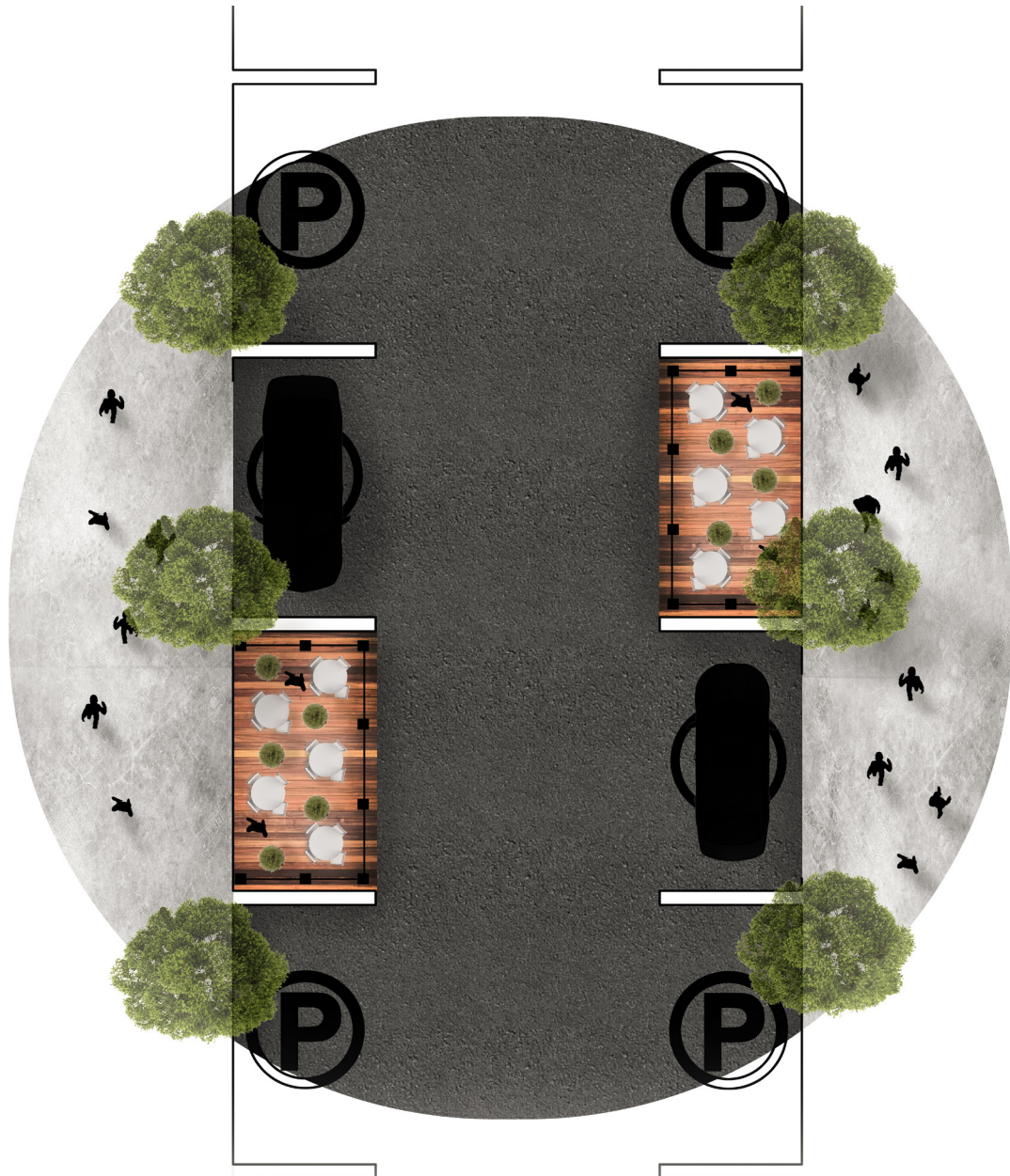


Figure 3.44: Parking spaces become parklets, patios, and spaces for people

Parklets & Streeteries

From parking to people

Why:

Parklets and streateries create attractive community spaces by repurposing parking stalls and road space with inviting elements like lighting, music, seating, and art. The Pavement to Parklets Program in San Francisco details how to increase pedestrian and cycling traffic every day of the week with the implementation of parklets (See Appendix C). The program has successfully converted 160 parking spaces into enjoyable public space since 2010.

Transit and active commuters are consumers who walk, cycle, and use public transportation to get to their destination areas. These consumers spend more time in the areas they travel to, meaning more of their money is spent on consumer goods in the area as opposed to visitors who drive. Parklets and Streateries can have a positive impact on the local economy by encouraging these types of commuters, through providing vital public space.

How:

The City of Edmonton should develop an online system that allows residents, the business community, and community groups to easily apply for parklet and streateries permits. This resource could also include easy to read design requirements, standards, and helpful tips for maintenance. The City of Seattle created a Parklet Patio Program (see Appendix C), in 2015, after receiving a large amount of parklet requests and running a successful pilot program.



Figure 3.45: A streeteries in Vancouver, British Columbia made possible by the VIVA Vancouver Parklet Program (Credit: VIVA Vancouver)



Figure 3.46: A parklet in San Francisco, California made possible by the City's Pilot Parklet Program (Credit: City of San Francisco)

Neighbourhood Renewal

Renewing community infrastructure

Neighbourhood Renewal is a City of Edmonton program that utilizes a cost effective, long-term strategic approach to renew and rebuild roads, sidewalks and street lights in existing neighbourhoods. West Ritchie is a candidate for Neighbourhood Renewal and should be included in the short-term plans by the Building Great Neighbourhoods section at the City of Edmonton.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton

Big Moves:



Figure 3.47: Conceptual placemaking guide

Neighbourhood Renewal

Renewing community infrastructure

Why:

Building Great Neighbourhoods did not include West Ritchie in the scope for either the Strathcona or Ritchie Neighbourhood Renewal Projects. Inconsistencies with the area's identity by City administration are emphasized by the City's recognition that West Ritchie is a part of the greater Ritchie neighbourhood on its neighbourhood maps, but choosing to include West Ritchie in the *Strathcona Area Redevelopment Plan* rather than the *Ritchie Area Redevelopment Plan*.

West Ritchie would benefit from addressing missing sidewalks and bike system links, poor lighting, and narrow sidewalks. Renewal would be a proactive step for the area's impending intensification. As commercial and residential activities increase in the area with development of the CP Railyards and new transit modes, there will be an even greater demand on the existing infrastructure.

How:

Advocate with the City of Edmonton to include West Ritchie in the Building Great Neighbourhoods Strathcona project to rehabilitate sidewalk infrastructure, lighting, and other street features. The OSBA can meet with the business community, neighbourhood residents, and community leagues to discuss the neighbourhood improvements they would like to see, and provide the City of Edmonton with this comprehensive input.

Improvements should include:

- replacing sidewalks and local roadways;
- adding decorative lighting;
- constructing curb ramps and intersection improvements;
- addressing missing links in sidewalks, shared-use paths, and the bike network; and increasing sidewalk width and adding boulevard trees.



Figure 3.48: Multi-use paths are included in the City of Edmonton's Strathcona Renewal program (Credit: City of Edmonton)



Figure 3.49: The City of Edmonton's Strathcona Renewal includes the revamp of alley space as space for people (Credit: City of Edmonton)

West Ritchie Identity

Defining the brand

A place brand and identity for West Ritchie should be developed that identifies and captures the perception and value of the district inherently important to the place. Residents, businesses, stakeholders, and visitors would be able to feel a sense of shared civic pride and loyalty toward a place that promises a unique experience.

Leaders:

OSBA, Business Community,
Neighbourhood Residents

Big Moves:



Figure 3.50: Conceptual branding campaign for West Ritchie as a part of the Distric Whyte brand

West Ritchie Identity

Defining the brand

Why:

A place brand and identity is important for encouraging commercial growth and establishing an integrated community. A brand and identity for Gateway/West Ritchie, as a part of the District Whyte Brand, will establish the area as a place instead of a place-between-places. This will encourage growth in the area, and drive more visitors to explore the area.

How:

A visual identity for West Ritchie should be designed and implemented by encouraging unique sidewalk tile and street furniture throughout the area. The District Whyte Brand should be promoted in the area and include “West Ritchie” as part of the image.

An “experience West Ritchie” program should be developed that includes way-finding, stories about local businesses and attractions, and local hot-spots.

Advocacy should be pursued for the creation of a “Historical Walking Tour” that allows visitors to guide themselves and explore Gateway/West Ritchie’s heritage and historical remnants.



Figure 3.51: A mural created for the branding campaign for 124 street in Edmonton
(Credit: The Globe)



Figure 3.52: Branded bus stop for the Downtown Revitalization campaign in Edmonton
(Credit: BLRN)

Wayfinding Strategy

Where to go, and how to get there

Signage should be installed that effectively guides pedestrian and vehicular traffic within West Ritchie. Wayfinding would simply and clearly illustrate a path to a chosen destination. A variety of landmarks, businesses, and buildings would be displayed for pedestrians.

Leaders:

OSBA, Business Community

Big Moves:



Figure 3.53: Wayfinding signage for West Ritchie

Why:

Wayfinding is vital for a well designed mainstreet and district, it gives the pedestrians and visitors the ability to navigate an area efficiently and safely.

Wayfinding improvements create an impressionable image on neighbourhood residents and visitors. Wayfinding can include signage on light posts, tenant directory signs on private developments, tactile pavement tiles, and the strategic placement of art. Wayfinding improvements, can include simple signage on light posts or tenant directory signs on private developments.

Wayfinding initiatives are encouraged by the *CityPlan*, specifically in provision 1.3.1.4: “Encourage urban design and wayfinding excellence at major city entrances.”

How:

The OSBA should work with the City Of Edmonton to implement the City Wayfinding Strategy, adapted for use in the Gateway/West Ritchie Area.

Signs should include local landmarks, destinations, and attractions, along with local businesses.

Wayfinding signage has been shown to increase customer foot traffic in local business areas, and in turn, the OSBA should consider cost-sharing the program with businesses and the City of Edmonton for faster implementation.

Wayfinding Strategy

Where to go, and how to get there



Figure 3.54: Pedestrian wayfinding standard in Edmonton (Credit: City of Edmonton)



Figure 3.55: Wayfinding signage outlined in Edmonton's Wayfinding Strategy (Credit: City of Edmonton)

Street Furnishings

Take a seat!

The public realm should be improved with the addition of functional, comfortable street furniture that all demographics can use in the Gateway/ West Ritchie and Old Strathcona area. Furnishing should be considered broadly in the entire plan area, with greater implementation in main streets and high-traffic pedestrian areas.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Business Community

Big Moves:



Figure 3.56: Furnishing can includes benches, planters, lighting, and boulevard trees, among others

Street Furnishing

Take a seat!

Why:

Street furniture gives the opportunity for people to relax and spend longer periods of time in the community. Street furniture reinforces walkability, pedestrian comfort, and encourages all demographics to explore the streets. Street furniture that offers a variety of seating options and ways to interact with an environment, along a clear barrier-free path of travel, serve themselves well for people of any age or ability.

Gateway/West Ritchie and the greater Old Strathcona area have few seating options available in public spaces, and have a limited range of street furniture explored in spaces that receive high-volumes of foot traffic.

With attention to the *CityPlan*, enhanced street furnishings would adhere to multiple provisions, including: 1.3.1.5: “encourage high quality urban design that celebrates the unique physical pattern of the city’s systems, networks and places.”

How:

Encourage and advocate for businesses and landowners to incorporate street furniture outside of their storefronts. The OSBA can bring awareness to the business community about the City of Edmonton Storefront Refresh Program, which will incentive businesses to implement street furniture and other business improvement initiatives for their storefront.

The City of Edmonton should also consider investing in a greater supply of street furniture throughout the area through neighbourhood renewal programs, direct investment, and cost-sharing with developers.



Figure 3.57: Street furniture in downtown Edmonton (Credit: City of Edmonton)



Figure 3.58: Street furniture follows specific typologies to keep area identity coherent (Credit: City of Edmonton)



Roadmap community strategies

Open Streets

Reclaiming the road

Reclaim the full streetscape into the public realm for active modes of transportation. Raise the awareness about the negative impacts that automobile-dominated streetscapes have on public life and sustainability of the City.

Leaders:

City of Edmonton, Community Groups

Scale:

City | Street

Timeline:

1 day

Purpose:

There is interest in the Edmonton community to host an Open Streets event for the summer of 2020 on Whyte Avenue. The effort is a part of a vision for Edmonton to become a multi-modal city where active transportation is a safe, accessible, year round option for all. Creating a recurring annual event for Whyte Avenue as an Open Street will help to change the perspective that Whyte Avenue should prioritize cars rather than people. Open Street events are effective in significantly increasing the amount of people in an area and benefiting the area's businesses with the localized foot traffic.



Figure 3.59: People dancing at an Open Streets event in Toronto, Ontario (Credit: blogTO)

How do we get there?

There are many online resources dedicated to the concept of Open Streets:

- The *Open Streets Project* has a free online toolkit.
- There is an *Open Streets Guide (2012)* published by Street Plans and Alliance for Biking & Walking



Figure 3.60: An Open Streets event in downtown Edmonton (Credit: Mack Male)

Mobile Food Vending

Traveling street chefs

Activate underutilized spaces with low-cost food options that attract a diversity of people to the area and help local vendors start their business.

Leaders:

Business Community, The City of Edmonton

Scale:

City | Street

Timeline:

1 day - year round

Purpose:

By enabling small businesses, the local economy is stimulated with entrepreneurial activity. Street food in itself can become a destination and a magnet for human activity. Using food carts/trucks as a simple way to activate surface parking lots and underutilized parks would be

How do we get there?

Currently the City of Edmonton only allows for vendors to be located on the City road rights-of-way. Information is provided on the City of Edmonton website to apply for a food vending permit. Food vending in park spaces does not have a formal process at the City of Edmonton, but other cities have formalized this type of vending, such as The City of Vancouver. Vancouver's comprehensive processes for Stationary and Mobile Food Vending in parks could be explored and used to advocate for the City of Edmonton to adopt similar processes.



Figure 3.61: The YEGCoffeeCan, a mobile cafe in Edmonton (Credit: Mack Male)



Figure 3.62: A mobile restaurant in Toronto, Ontario pops up quickly in under-utilized space (Credit: Spacing Magazine)

Pop-up Art Galleries

Art for the streets

Pop-up art galleries are a great way to add vibrancy to city streets, and showcase the great local talent within communities. Artists can display their work on streets, allowing passers by to engage with them and their art, and possibly purchase a piece or two. Galleries can be expensive to go to, hard for local artists to exhibit at, and are generally within private buildings.

Leaders:

Neighbourhood Residents, Artists, Community Leagues, Neighbourhood Residents

Scale:

City | Street

Timeline:

6 months - 1 year

Purpose:

Pop-up art galleries create vibrant public life by bringing the arts outdoors and providing spaces for local artists.

Pop-up galleries can appear on streets, but also inside of vacant storefronts. Artists post their art inside of storefronts to activate the space and provide color, vibrancy, and whimsy to spaces previously vacant of life. Empty storefronts detract from street life by breaking up city streets and giving the impression that “no one is here”. By showcasing their art in empty storefronts, artists can gain exposure, create interesting street life, and add some colour to streets.



Figure 3.63: Empty storefronts provide space for local artists in Charleston, South Carolina (Credit: Charleston Regional Development Authority)

How do we get there?

The Whyte Ave Art Walk is a pop-up gallery space on Whyte Avenue that brings hundreds of artists together to showcase their work on the street. Hundreds upon hundreds of visitors walk the art walk every year, checking out local artists work and engaging in vibrant public life. The event also draws spin off investment to local business as people stroll down the avenue.

The OSBA can expand the Whyte Ave Art Walk model and utilize more of the Gateway/West Ritchie area. Empty storefronts and vacant lots can also be explored as places for artists to exhibit their work publicly.



Figure 3.64: Art Walk on Whyte Avenue provides temporary public space for local artists (Credit: Old Strathcona Times)

Pavement to Plazas

From asphalt to public space

Pavement-to-plaza programs started in cities like New York and San Francisco as ways to repurpose road space as people space in crowded areas. Temporary, inexpensive materials like paint, planters, and street furniture are used to reallocate space from cars to people. Because these initiatives are temporary in nature and require little capital investment, spaces can pop up quickly and have a large impact.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Community Leagues

Scale:

City | Neighborhood

Timeline:

6 months - 2 years

Purpose:

Repurposed spaces have benefits for the local community and the city as a whole — they support businesses, encourage active transportation modes like cycling and walking, and create vibrant spaces for tourists and residents alike.

Tim Tompkins tested the idea in New York, setting out 376 folding chairs he purchased for \$10.74 each in a crowded square — what would now be known as the famous Times Square. In 2017, the City of Vancouver tested their own pavement-to-plazas initiative at the corner of Bute and Robson street — they found that neighborhood residents adored the new public space, with little traffic impacts on the area.

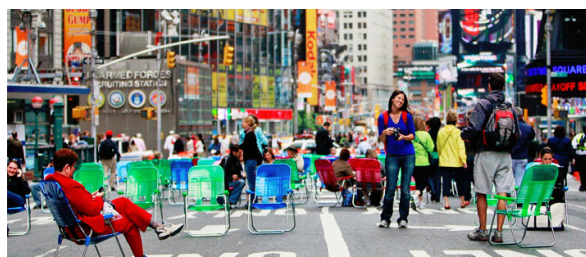


Figure 3.65: Chairs set out in what would become the famous Times Square, New York (Credit: NBC New York)

How do we get there?

The City will usually fund the design and construction of the space, while community groups are often tasked with maintaining, programming, and utilizing the space. Community groups can also be an integral part of the design and construction process — all it takes is some initiative and creative thinking.

Because of the low cost and high impact of these projects, Cities and communities are able to test out public plaza ideas and engage with spaces that were previously reserved for cars. Permanent plazas are then often considered for successful spaces, as the impact and desire is already established.



Figure 3.66: Bute-Robson Plaza, made possible by VIVA Vancouver's Pavement-to-Plaza program (Credit: VIVA Vancouver)

PARK(ing) Day

Take to the streets!

PARK(ing) Day is a world-wide tactical urbanism event held on the first Friday of September, each year. The event invites citizens, activists, urbanists, and designers to take to the streets and repurpose parking stalls as spaces for people. PARK(ing) Day is a celebration of public space, and brings both vibrancy and street life to city blocks and awareness to the vast amount of space devoted to automobiles on city streets.

Leaders:

OSBA, The City of Edmonton

Scale:

City | Street | Block

Timeline:

6 months - 1 year

Purpose:

PARK(ing) Day brings people, communities, and organizations together to create vibrant and engaging public spaces on their streets. The possibilities are endless — participants have created parklets, playgrounds, mini-golf courses, pop-up art shows, and many others. All it takes is some creative thinking, an open parking space, and the drive to reclaim the streets as places for people.

How do we get there?

Rebar, a design studio in San Francisco, started the movement by reclaiming a parking stall outside of their studio with a simple stretch of sod and a few chairs. The event grew in popularity across North American cities with advocates taking to the streets to reclaim their own public spaces. While anyone can participate in PARK(ing) Day, Rebar has published a *PARK(ing) Day Manifesto* which covers basic guidelines and a how-to manual for reclaiming space in your city.

The OSBA can work with the City of Edmonton to curate and run a PARK(ing) Day event in the Gateway/West Ritchie area to reclaim public space and start thinking about the impact parklets can have for the community.



Figure 3.67: A parklet installation at PARK(ing) Day 2019 in Edmonton (Credit: DESIGN, et cetera.)

Temporary Bike Lanes

Two-wheeled activism

Provide separation for cyclists from vehicles, enhance cyclist safety, and encourage a diversity of cyclists to visit the area by using cost-saving temporary measures.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Cycling Advocacy Organizations

Scale:

City | Street

Timeline:

1 - 2 years



Figure 3.68: A temporary bike lane during StreetsAlive! in Fargo, North Dakota (Credit: North Dakota Medical Association)

Purpose:

Edmonton has seen a growing embrace of its separated bike infrastructure installed in 2017. Before this, bike lanes across Edmonton were painted, without any physical barrier separating cyclists from vehicles. Creating separated lanes provides cyclists with the comfort of safety and encourages cyclists of all abilities to cycle to their destinations. The City of Edmonton has already experimented with temporary bike lanes throughout the downtown using paint, signs and concrete forms and could easily implement the same infrastructure in the plan area.

The 2015 Edmonton and Region Household Travel Survey showed that Edmonton area residents made 3.14 million trips on an average weekday, of which 77.6% were by car and 8.6% by transit, and the remainder by walking and biking.

How do we get there?

Sanctioned Method

Working with the City of Edmonton is the formal process for getting bike infrastructure installed. Building Great Neighbourhoods often includes bike infrastructure as part of a neighbourhood's renewal. The Strathcona neighbourhood renewal, however, does not include a separated lanes on 102 Street from 86 Avenue to 82 Avenue, and on 100 Street from 83 Avenue to 76 Avenue.

Unsanctioned Method

Guerilla bike lanes are informal processes where citizens use paint, traffic cones and planters to create their own separated lanes. These attempts are usually removed within days by the City, but they draw the attention of City officials who have to acknowledge a need in the community for bike infrastructure.

Pop-Up Info Booths

Supporting tourism

The Old Strathcona Farmers' Market and High Level Bridge Streetcar both see high numbers of visitors to Edmonton, and a visitor booth can help direct these visitors to Gateway/West Ritchie, and the broader Old Strathcona area, by providing them with area maps, walking tours, and information on surrounding businesses and modes of transportation

Leaders:

City of Edmonton, OSBA

Scale:

City | Street | Block

Timeline:

1 - 2 years

Purpose:

Whyte Avenue is projected to have an expansion to the diversity of public transit connections and, already, is a destination for Edmontonians and visitors.

The Old Strathcona Farmers' Market and High Level Bridge Streetcar attract many of these visitors, and with the extension of the streetcar into the plan area, there is an opportunity to encourage the exploration of West Ritchie with a programmed space for tours and information distribution.



Figure 3.69: Seacan containers can be easily modified into pop-up booths (Credit: Storstac)

How do we get there?

Using 1-2 parking spaces in the City of Edmonton Parking lot at the corner of Gateway Boulevard and Whyte Avenue, a temporary booth can be implemented.

This may require:

- Collaboration with the City of Edmonton for use of the space;
- staff/volunteers so that one can lead a tour while others tend to the booth;
- and fundraising for information materials.



Figure 3.70: A pop-up visitor information booth in Montreal, Quebec with iPads showcasing park information (Credit: Parc de Reve)

Laneway Naming Event

Branding the alley network

Naming laneways can be a way to provide the community a sense of ownership, give the laneway and businesses located there an identity/address, signalling it as public space ripe for formal improvement.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, OSBA, Business Community, Neighbourhood residents

Scale:

City | Street | Alley

Timeline:

1 month

Purpose:

The laneway between 82 and 81 Avenues features business space, but was identified as unsafe in conversations with other businesses in the area. Bringing the community together to give the laneway a name can be a way to reference and celebrate the area's history, reclaim the corridor for pedestrians, and make the laneway a desirable place for entrepreneurs to locate.

Spur Line Alley in Strathcona is an example of laneway naming, receiving the name in a city-wide naming contest (2017). City of Toronto Laneway Project (Appendix C) is a not-for-profit organization with many how-to-guides for detailed instruction on laneway activation.

How do we get there?

The City of Edmonton doesn't have a formal process for naming laneways. In an effort to demand response from the City, the community can come together and informally provide a name. This guerilla initiative will suggest to the City that there is a need for a formal laneway naming process. Plaques and wayfinding can feature the new name, and an unveiling ceremony can be held by the community. Hosting the event in the laneway would further help to reclaim the lane as public space.



Figure 3.71: The City of Edmonton unveils "Spur Line Alley" after a laneway naming contest in 2017 (Credit: City of Edmonton)

Guerilla Wayfinding

Citizen led direction

Guerilla Wayfinding is a way to promote the businesses and landmarks in the area. Temporary wayfinding signs, posted by citizens, can kickstart a formal wayfinding program and introduce more visitors to the area. These temporary signs will increase walkability, allow citizens to discover West Ritchie, and prompt the City of Edmonton to install permanent wayfinding signage.

Leaders:

OSBA, Neighborhood Residents

Scale:

City | Street | Block

Timeline:

1 month

Purpose:

Guerilla Wayfinding is a great way to give pedestrians an indication of the distance and direction to key destinations. This in turn promotes the areas walkability and encourages new visitors to explore the area further.

Raleigh, North Carolina used a similar tactic. A local Raleigh resident, wanting to encourage walkability within the city, installed temporary simple wayfinding signs. Eventually, these signs were removed and replaced with permanent wayfinding signage from the City of Raleigh.



Figure 3.72: Hanging guerilla wayfinding signage for the “WalkRaleigh” campaign (Credit: CityLab)

How do we get there?

Sanctioned Approach:

Tenants can vouch to landlords or building owners to incorporate wayfinding signage on the building. Simple design modifications can be made to showcase business. The Storefront Improvement Program or Storefront Refresh Program can cover part of the cost of signage and building improvement

Unsanctioned Approach:

Without a formal process for requesting wayfinding signage, neighbourhood residents and the business community can create and install wayfinding signs on their own. The community can begin by making a list of landmarks and businesses people may have a hard time navigating to. A simple design that indicates the destination, should include the direction and the time it takes to reach it. Print these signs on plastic correx sheets and zip tie them at a pedestrian’s eye level in high traffic areas.

Chair Bombing

Take a seat!

Reclaiming public space and providing seating for pedestrians throughout the area. Businesses can provide temporary seating areas for customers to linger and advocates for people to walk as there is somewhere to rest.

Leaders:

Business Community, Neighbourhood Residents

Scale:

City | Street | Block

Timeline:

1 day - 6 months

Purpose:

Chair Bombing is the act of building chairs out of underutilized materials and placing them in the public realm to create a more lively, comfortable space. Pedestrians, workers, and business patrons will be able to sit and enjoy the space. The City of Edmonton can be nudged to that some public spaces need additional amenities in the public realm that people remember and enjoy. Chair Bombing has been used as a tactical urbanism technique in many different cities including New York, San Francisco, and Victoria.



Figure 3.73: Chair bombing in front of a vacant lot (or not) in San Francisco, California (Credit: Cargo Collective)

How do we get there?

Neighbourhood residents and groups can build or find chairs and put them in public places that they have identified ahead of time. Recycled materials (i.e. wood pallets) can be used cost-effective chair creation.



Figure 3.74: Chair bombing parklet in San Francisco, California (Credit: Cargo Collective)

Block Parties

Small parties with big impact

Block Parties are small street-scale parties that temporarily activate public roadways. These events allow community members to get to know each other, businesses to spill out into streets, and usually feature live music, beer gardens, food vendors, and all types of fun activities.

Leaders:

OSBA, Business Community, Neighbourhood Residents, Community Leagues

Scale:

City | Street

Timeline:

1 - 3 days

Purpose:

Block Parties are an opportunity to showcase businesses and attract new and existing customers to the neighbourhood. Block Parties can generate more foot traffic and exposure that benefits small businesses, and foster a sense of place and community pride.

Block parties are organized at a neighbourhood scale to facilitate neighbourhood connections, however can include more organization and resources to serve as a larger event for the greater community to participate in. Costs vary depending on the size and duration of the party.



Figure 3.75: The Mercer Summer Super Party takes over 104 Street in downtown Edmonton (Credit: Edmonton Next Gen)

How do we get there?

Community members should choose a location to hold the party (i.e. 81 Avenue, the Farmers' Market Parking Lot). Community buy-in is needed to facilitate a successful event, and canvassing the community to gather support for the event will help build momentum.

If the Block Party is being held on City property (a road or park), a permit is needed by applying to Parks and Services. Once a permit is required, temporary chair, tables, lights, music, and food and beverage vendors can be spread out throughout the space.

Developing marketing material that showcases the people and businesses participating will help bring people to the event, and unique activities and programs will ensure everyone has a great time.

Self-Guided Historical Walking Tours

Exploring West Ritchie's history

A Historical Walking Tour Brochure is used to self-guide Edmontonians between the historic landmarks and stories of West Ritchie and the CP Railyard Lands. Allowing Edmontonians to capture the storied history of former residents and business owners can help reinforce the heritage identity of West Ritchie.

Leaders:

The City of Edmonton, The Government of Alberta Heritage Council

Scale:

City

Timeline:

1 - 2 years

Purpose:

A Historical Walking Tour allows community members and Edmontonians to identify with the area and share a sense of civic pride. A Historical Walking Tour leads Edmontonians through the streets of Gateway/West Ritchie, making them familiar with the area and what it has to offer. Historical Walking Tours are usually completed in groups, allowing for social interaction and shared experience with others

How do we get there?

The City of Edmonton Heritage Resource Management Program develops walking brochures of Edmonton neighbourhoods and districts that have rich historical character. The current Strathcona Heritage Walk Tour finishes at Arendt's Machine Shop on 81st Avenue. Advocate for the Heritage Planning section at the City of Edmonton to develop a brochure for West Ritchie and to develop public ornaments and spectacles that commemorate the area's significant moments and stories.

The *Edmonton City As Museum* Project tells stories of people, places, things and moments that make Edmonton our story. Have the organization open up a call for proposals of stories, articles, and photos submitted of West Ritchie and the CP Lands. Include these in a self-guided walking tour.



Figure 3.76: A historical walking tour in Edmonton
(Credit: City of Edmonton)

West Ritchie Website

Utilizing technology

An “Experience West Ritchie” website can raise awareness of the business and service mix in the district in the creation of a website that captures photos, video’s, stories, destinations, and programming and events in West Ritchie.

Leaders:

OSBA

Scale:

City | Neighbourhood

Timeline:

1 year

Purpose:

CEO For Cities, a planning advocacy group, suggests “a brand that’s clear, compelling and unique is the foundation that helps make a place desirable as a business location, visitor destination or a place to call home. A branding strategy is a deeper, emotionally shared vision that influences action.”

By developing an “Experience West Ritchie” website, the District Whyte brand can be utilized to attract more visitors to Gateway/West Ritchie.

How do we get there?

Engage with residents, local businesses, and visitors who use West Ritchie to gather a set of place characteristics, keywords, and phrases that capture West Ritchie’s identity and differentiate it from other the rest of Edmonton. Survey methods (participant surveys, follow up interviews) can be used to determine how people characterize the district, and to learn about spatial perception of the district.

The London Bridge District completed a place-identity project to learn about the destination people value, and created a website that is driven from key words and phrases collected from engagement with the business community and residents (see Appendix C)

Find a visual platform that is suitable for the community. This could be an extension on the OSBA website showcasing the unique flavour of West Ritchie and its destinations.



Figure 3.77: The Explore Edmonton website outlines things to do and attractions across Edmonton (Credit: Explore Edmonton)

Beautification Brochure

A how-to guide for beautification

A Greenery Brochure for the Old Strathcona Business Association can simply communicate the benefits of trees and flowers, what property managers can do to take care of trees, and the role of the City and OSBA for area greenery.

Leaders:

OSBA, The City of Edmonton

Scale:

City | Neighbourhood

Timeline:

1 year

Purpose:

Providing outreach and education on how to maintain and greenery can neighbourhood residents and the business community to contribute to the beautification and health of the streetscape. Street trees work best when planted close together, and planted greenery flourishes when the community knows to maintain them from season to season.



Figure 3.78: The Bloomin' Boulevards program offers a planting incentive for business improvement area businesses (Credit: Zocalo)

How do we get there?

Design a brochure with the City of Edmonton, community organizations, and eager community residents on how to beautify and maintain Old Strathcona trees and plants. Research and write about what property managers can do to maintain trees, how additional trees and plants can be grown on properties, and outline differences in how the OSBA and the City contribute to area greenery and planting.

The Downtown DC Business Improvement District created a beautify & maintain downtown trees brochure for business owners located in the district. The brochure is made to inform property owners what their responsibility is for maintaining trees and plants, compared to the responsibility of the business association and the City (see Appendix C)

Guerilla Gardening

Not your grandmas garden!

Gardening and beautifying the land on underutilized green spaces to make the area more attractive and to promote change. Gardening on street medians, on the sidewalk right-of-ways, and on vacant lots promotes the area as a pedestrian-oriented place. Guerilla Gardening is a growing social and environmental movement motivated to rethink public spaces.

Leaders:

OSBA

Scale:

City | Neighbourhood

Timeline:

6 months - 1 year

Purpose:

Guerilla Gardening increases the amount of greenery in a community and brightens up open space that is in poor condition or underutilized. Streetscapes that are attractive, have greenery, and appear to be cared for by the community, are seen as walkable destinations. Gardening brings people closer to the public realm, allowing for streets that feel safe.



Figure 3.79: Guerilla gardening on the side of a wall, using recycled materials (Credit: Happiness Andy Blog)

How do we get there?

The Green Streets Program offered by the City of Vancouver allows residents to adopt a boulevard, street median, corner bulb, traffic circle to garden on. Gardeners, or otherwise community residents, are responsible for picking the plants, and maintaining the garden for as long as they wish (see Appendix C).

In Gateway/West Ritchie, the Business Community and Neighbourhood residents can identify underutilized spaces, draw out garden plans ahead of the growing season, identify seeds that are native to the area and non-invasive, and build relationships with wholesalers and nurseries who would be willing to provide plants and equipment at a discount.

Pop-up Retail & Cafes

Short-term spaces for big-time entrepreneurs

Pop Up Retailing (or “Flash Retailing”) offers temporary short-term shopping experiences that are located in temporary movable structures or in vacant retail storefronts or spaces.

Leaders:

OSBA, Business Community

Scale:

City | Neighborhood

Timeline:

6 months - 2 years

Purpose:

Pop Up Retail is an impermanent, low-risk opportunity for small scale retailers and entrepreneurs to occupy spaces on short-term leases. Vacant storefronts that sit empty for too long can damage the neighbourhoods perception for community residents and the business community.

How do we get there?

Revolve Detroit was launched in 2012 by the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation in collaboration with artists, business owners, community organizations, and locals. The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation supports vendors by allowing access to financial assistance, providing technical assistance to find a site, and to help with business planning and permitting (see Appendix C).

The OSBA can develop a platform to connect vendors with property owners with vacant spaces or with existing businesses who will share part of their space. The OSBA can build a resource page to outline the costs and operational considerations of pop up retail to allow interested vendors to evaluate the true cost of a short-term lease.



Figure 3.80: Shipping containers turned into pop-up retail spaces at Delkab Market in Brooklyn, New York (Credit: Isabelle Yasik)

DIY Crosswalks

Taking safety into your own hands

Partner with community organizations, neighbourhood residents, and the business community to paint the intersection of 81st avenue and 100 street with decorative bands, using an original and unique design to represent the community.

Leaders:

Community Leagues, Neighbourhood Residents, OSBA

Scale:

City | Street | Block

Timeline:

6 months - 1 year

Purpose:

Crosswalk design can celebrate the shared value of the community, and punctuate visual connections between main street and residential destinations. Unique and visible crosswalk design enhances pedestrian safety, supports walkability, and encourages safe driver behaviour.



Figure 3.81: Guerilla crosswalks can bring out the communities creativity — no matter how young (Credit: Project for Public Spaces)



Figure 3.82: The community paints a DIY crosswalk in Bogota, Columbia (Credit: Project for Public Spaces)

How do we get there?

The OSBA should partner with community organizations, neighbourhood residents, and the business community to organize volunteers to paint the crosswalk. Two evenings need to be set-aside to paint and to perform touch-ups. Residents should submit design concepts and select a colour that reflects Gateway/ West Ritchie identity. The Community Painted Crosswalk Initiative in the City of Seattle (Appendices C) estimates that community painted crosswalks cost \$35 per CAN on average (based on the length, width, and materials chosen). The OSBA can also lead by drafting budget and to develop a traffic control plan.

Pilot Parklet

Parking for people, instead of cars

Pilot a Parklet installation along Whyte Avenue (between 102nd and 99th street) or in West Ritchie to recover part of the road right-of-way for pedestrians. A pilot can help generate an open dialogue for the long-term installation of community parklets.

Leaders:

OSBA, Business Community

Scale:

City | Street | Block

Timeline:

6 months - 1 year

Purpose:

Parklets create attractive community spaces by repurposing parking stalls and road space with inviting elements like lighting, music, seating, and art. Parklets can create new opportunities to bring the community together and foster collaboration.



Figure 3.83: The “FLATPARK” pilot parklet installation by publiccity in Toronto, Ontario (Credit: publiccity)

How do we get there?

Work with the City of Edmonton to learn about the building requirements, operating requirements, and permitting that is required for Parklet installation in the select sites.

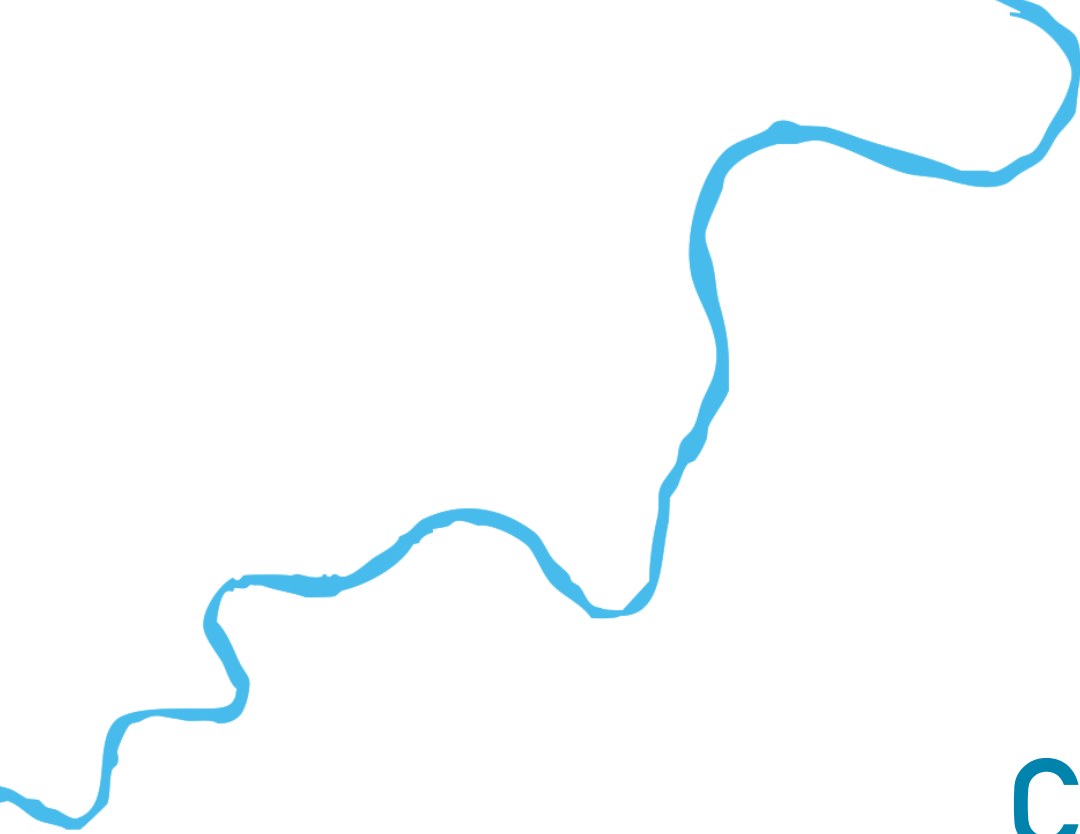
Reach out to community stakeholders and businesses interested in receiving an installation. Ignite a steering committee who is responsible for the build and maintenance activities of the Parklet.

Host a grand opening event to celebrate the complete Parklet with the community.



Figure 3.84: The “Isaac Kornelson memorial parklet” on Whyte Avenue in Edmonton (Credit: Spacing Magazine)





Closing Remarks

A Plan for People

Public Spaces, Public Life

The Public Spaces, Public Life Plan is a comprehensive framework that seeks to enhance public life in the area of Gateway/West Ritchie through a bold 20 year vision expressed by four long-term Big Moves, 17 medium-term Recommendations, and 20 short-term Community Strategies. The Plan is designed for the needs of its project sponsor, the Old Strathcona Business Association, which has a mandate to activate underutilized spaces and strengthen perceptions of safety in Old Strathcona in order to create a thriving business and destination district.



Figure 4.1: The Public Spaces, Public Life Plan focuses on creating vibrant public life for active, engaged communities (Credit: DESIGN, et cetera.)

Moving into implementation, the framework outlines the City and community partnerships that the OSBA needs to develop in order to ensure the successful outcome of projects. By collaborating with the community, the community's capacity for placemaking, and sense of ownership of the public realm, will increase and lead to sustainable, resilient outcomes. In addition to partnering on projects, City administration can use this resource to help inform their own projects for the greater area of Old Strathcona.

Whyte Avenue is one of the most vibrant corridors in Edmonton, but its east-end feels disconnected. The *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* outlines how the Gateway/West Ritchie community can initiate change for a cohesive identity and how the City of Edmonton can streamline that change through proactive planning that activates public space, enhances mobility, and provides for all-inclusive public life.

Gateway/West Ritchie has many strengths and opportunities that, if capitalized on, will benefit the bottomline of businesses in the area through increased safety, events, mobility, and resiliency. Case studies of cities leading the way with similar placemaking efforts are included in Appendix C of this report and should encourage stakeholders that public realm improvement is achievable and can benefit the area's overall prosperity.



Figure 4.2: The Plan empowers communities to create their own change and reclaim public space (Credit: DESIGN, et cetera.)

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Appendices A

area analysis

Area Analysis

Methodology

The following public places plans helped shape the project's understanding of methodologies for a site analysis:

- *Place Inventory Worksheet: Gehl Institute*, and
- *The Well-being Assessment: Viva Vancouver*.



Figure 5.1: A surface parking lot on Whyte Avenue, disrupting the street wall

The following lessons were noted in the review of each document:

- Observations of physical features in a space should include how the features support the experience of individuals spending time there.
- Actively attempt to imagine how users different than yourself, for example, seniors and children, would feel in space.
- Photos and ethnographic notes should accompany any observation that is not represented in the framework or tool used.
- Create a check-list of different questions to answer on the visit, and for each question, have consistent options to choose from (i.e. no, mostly no, mostly yes, absolutely).
- Public surveys need to be considerate of the limited amount of time users prefer to answer questions, and include project-related and demographic questions.
- Include key areas of interest to define and embed in each analysis undertaken (i.e. sociability, trust, safety, inclusion and place attachment).



Figure 5.2: A lack of street furniture makes otherwise quality pedestrian space hostile



Figure 5.3: A back alley business in West Ritchie

Area Analysis Methodology

The methodology for the *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* is respectful of the description above, and represents an expedited version as a result of the short project timeline. Site visits were completed in January by the project team. The observational lens used is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the urban design, urban form, movement and pathways, and transportation mode connectivity.

The following studies were completed:

- **Movement Analysis**
- **Building Inventory**
- **Nodes and Corridor Assessment**
- **Urban Design Analysis**

Public surveys were excluded from the study scope based on the large site size and the need to collect data on physical site features. The project team walked through the site area and captured data using an audio recording, field notes, and simple site map observations.

Photos were collected of physical site features that had produced enthused conversation within the team.

Two working sessions were designated for talking through findings and collecting additional information on the site from third parties. Verification of the information collected was tested against Google Maps, Street View and SLIM Maps.

Each project member was assigned ownership over one of the four studies. Project members produced maps representing the high-level findings by each study.

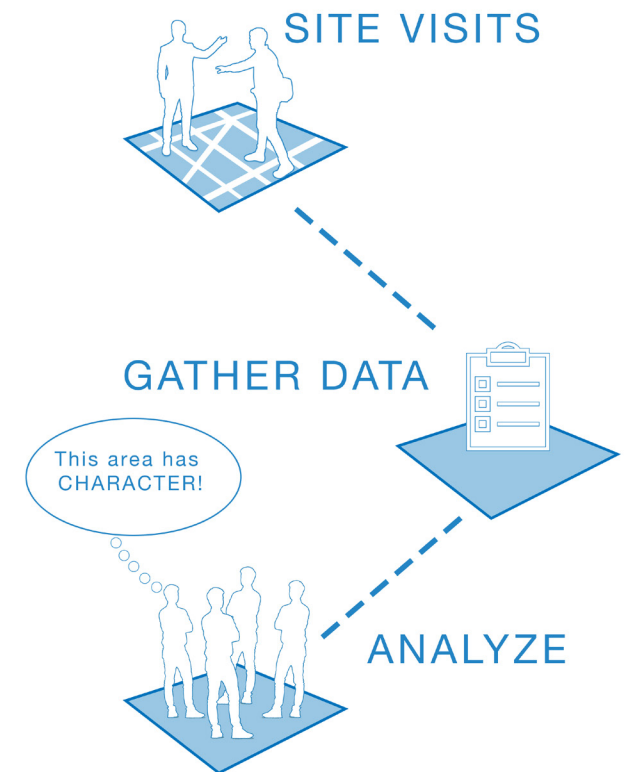


Figure 5.4: The project team conducted site visits, gathered data, and then analyzed thoroughly to understand the area

Nodes + Corridors Analysis

Nodes and Corridors were studied to think about how different activities and uses intersect and interact with each other across the site. Identifying Nodes and Corridors will help form an understanding of where activity centres already exist, and how growth and transportation patterns may develop into the future.

Nodes will refer to large-scale urban centres that serve multiple districts and are typically anchored by public institutions and act as significant employment centres. (*Draft City Plan, 2020*)

District Nodes support a variety of housing, employment and community amenities, often within a short walk or bike ride from other parts of the district. (*Draft City Plan, 2020*)

Corridors will refer to vibrant and prominent urban streets designed for living, working and moving that serve as destinations in themselves. (*Draft City Plan, 2020*)

Secondary Corridors will refer to vibrant residential and commercial streets that serve as a local destination for surrounding communities, and are more residential in nature. (*Draft City Plan, 2020*)

Two steps were completed in this study:

1. Observations were conducted of major activity centres, prominent roads and streets, and how they function together.
2. A review of the Draft City Plan identified the officially designated nodes and corridors inside and outside the site area.

The *City Plan* will be used to influence long term growth and transportation investment over the next 20-years. Nodes and Corridors listed below mirror the *Draft City Plan* for this reason. The project team also made note of major activity centres that can form in the near-future and/or that may exist at a finer-grain of detail to the *Draft City Plan*.

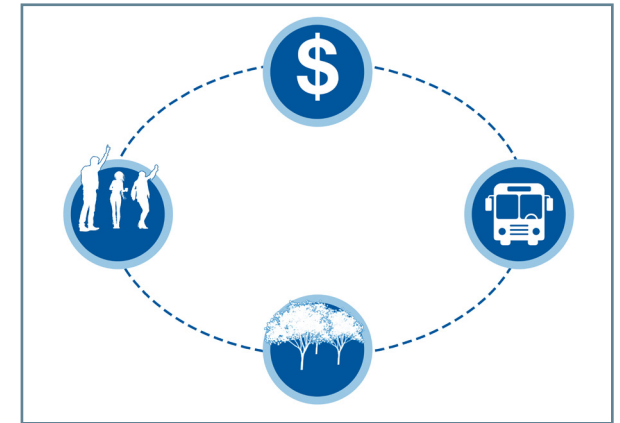


Figure 5.5: Nodes are important economic and cultural drivers in the city.

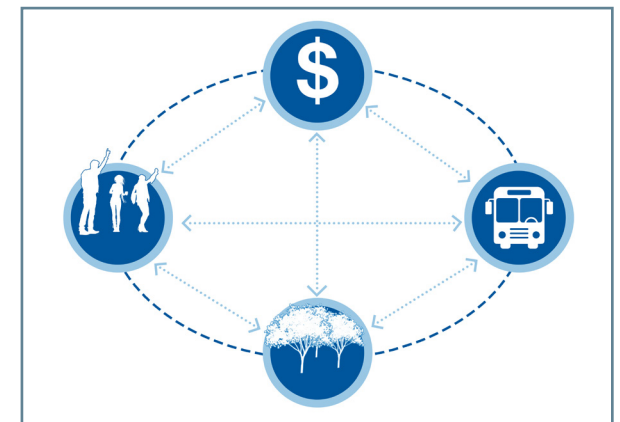


Figure 5.6: Corridors connect people in the city with culture, economic activity, and vibrant nodes.

Nodes + Corridors

Analysis

Strengths

Major Nodes (University of Alberta / Garneau)

The University of Alberta/Garneau area is anchored by large public institutional centres and offers employment and living opportunities for Edmontonians. Continuing to enhance this node will support a lively and vibrant Old Strathcona Area as a dense residential population that requires a diversity of public transportation options and various open space typologies

Primary Corridors (Whyte Avenue, 99th Street, Calgary Trail, Gateway Boulevard)

Each corridor is the recipient of large amounts of pedestrian and vehicular traffic promoting pedestrian activity at all hours of the day and night. Primary corridors help direct traffic toward key destinations in Old Strathcona and Gateway/West Ritchie, including the Old Strathcona Farmer's' Market and the River Valley.

District Nodes

Bonnie Doon promises to be a future destination with investment in the transformation of the Bonnie Doon Mall to include high density residential and commercial uses in the *Bonnie Doon Master Plan (2018)*, the completion of the Valley Line LRT platform (to be operational in 2021), and the University of Alberta's Campus St. Jean. Bonnie Doon's proximity to the University of Alberta/Garneau Node can provide a strong east-west connection that neighbourhoods in between would be able to capitalize on with placemaking strategies and public space activation. Completion of the Valley Line will help reduce existing vehicular traffic, and justify investment in and the strengthening of multi-modal transportation networks.

Potential Secondary Corridor (76 Avenue)

76 Avenue has the potential to connect through the CP Railyards and provide a strong east-west connection for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic. The consolidation of bike infrastructure on 76 Avenue can help anchor other south bike grid extensions. Improvements to 76 Avenue on the east-side of Strathcona Junction can help guide users more directly into the West Ritchie area.

Potential Local Corridor (81 Avenue)

81st Avenue has started to represent and resemble a local main street for the West Ritchie area. The continuation of investment and improvement to entry points into West Ritchie will help allow for a greater depth of activity to concentrate along the corridor.

Nodes + Corridors

Challenges

Challenges

Major Nodes (University of Alberta/ Garneau)

Generating greater intensity around the University of Alberta Hospital may reinforce dependency on Whyte Avenue for emergency vehicle access and may restrict reconfiguration of Whyte Avenue and other primary corridors. Alternative heavy traffic east-west connections are absent in the area.

District Nodes

While the Bonnie Doon Mall is slated for redevelopment, its current state is not conducive for it to be considered a successful node. Even after the LRT is operational, there will still be a shortage of multi-modal connections and amenities until the full vision in the *Bonnie Doon Master Plan (2018)* is developed.

Primary Corridors (Whyte Avenue, 99th Street, Calgary Trail, Gateway Boulevard)

The intersection of Gateway Boulevard and Whyte Avenue has created traffic intensity that is harmful to the pedestrian perception of safety and may discourage pedestrians from walking eastward of Gateway Boulevard. Dependence on these corridors will restrain innovative traffic connection improvements where pedestrian connections are needed. The existing configuration of each corridor encourages traveling through rather than exploring Gateway/West Ritchie.

Potential Local Corridor (81st Avenue)

81 Avenue has experienced growth facilitated by small business and without formal direction. In response to organic growth, an identifiable character has emerged along 81 Avenue, and largely, the West Ritchie area. Positive improvements to transportation mode connectivity and more place making opportunities on 81st avenue may disrupt the existing feel and business-mix of the corridor.

Nodes + Corridors

Draft City Plan (2020)

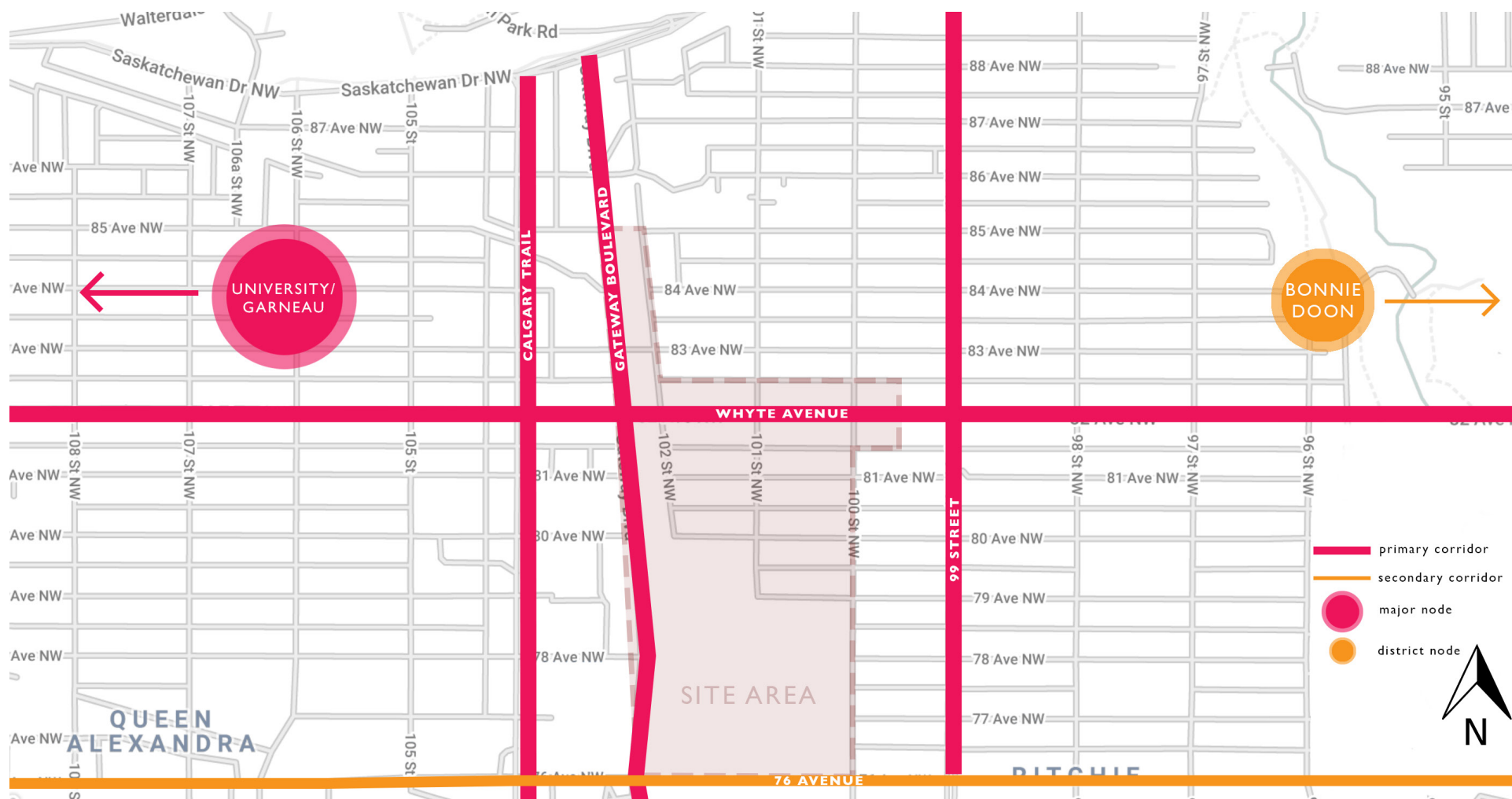


Figure 5.7: The Nodes & Corridors in and around the Gateway/West Ritchie area

Mobility Analysis

Methodology:

Mobility was analyzed by determining the existing transportation networks, the proposed future connections, and the missing linkages/infrastructure within and around the site. The analysis focused on walkability, active transportation, public transportation, and shared and private vehicular transportation. By identifying how these connections function and whether they possess strengths or weaknesses, strategies will be developed in *Phase 2: Concept Development* to improve the site's mobility (see page 148 for an overview of the area's mobility networks).



Figure 5.8: A streetcar is one of the unique mobility features in Gateway/West Ritchie

Strengths:

Bike Infrastructure

83 Avenue

- Existing bidirectional bike lane from 111 Street to 99 Street and a protected contraflow bike lane with a shared one way travel lane from 99 Street to Mill Creek Ravine

100 Street

- As part of Building Great Neighbourhoods' Strathcona project, a bidirectional separated bike lane is being installed from Whyte Avenue to Saskatchewan Drive

87 Avenue

- As part of Building Great Neighborhoods' Strathcona project, a protected contraflow bike lane with a shared one way travel lane is being installed from Tommy Banks Way to 97 Street

Tommy Banks Way/86 Avenue

- As part of Building Great Neighbourhoods' Strathcona project, a protected bidirectional separated bike lane is being installed connecting 87 Avenue at 102 Street to 86 Avenue at Gateway Boulevard

Transit Infrastructure

Bus Network

- The site is accessible by bus along Whyte Avenue. The four bus stops located within the site are located at: 102 Street and 82 Avenue & 101 Street and 82 Avenue



Figure 5.9: Bikes and e-scooters are both major mobility features in Gateway/West Ritchie

Streetcar

- The streetcar operates from May to September and provides a connection from Strathcona to the Oliver neighbourhood. A proposed 250m extension will bring the streetcar further south to the north edge of Whyte Avenue between Gateway Boulevard (103 Street) and 102 Street. The Edmonton Radial Railway Society is anticipating construction will begin in summer 2020.

Gondola

- Prairie Sky Gondola is proposing a gondola that would connect Strathcona, West Rosedale, and Downtown Edmonton. The project proposal features two stops in Strathcona: one outside of the site in the End of Steel Park, and one on the north edge of Whyte Avenue (occupying the same parcel as the streetcar extension).

Shared Transit

Carshare

- The site is located within the Comunauto carshare area

E-Scooters

- The site is within approved zones for Bird and Lime E-Scooters



Figure 5.10: POGO carshare is an Edmonton born business available in Gateway/West Ritchie

Multi-Use Paths

Saskatchewan Drive

- Existing multi use path on its north side connecting High Level Bridge/ Walterdale Hill to 99th Street

86 Avenue

- As part of the Building Great Neighborhoods' Strathcona project, a shared use path is being installed on the south side of 86 Avenue from Gateway Boulevard to 106 Street

Whyte Avenue / Gateway Boulevard / 106 Street

- As part of Building Great Neighborhoods' Strathcona project, a shared use path is being installed on the east side of Gateway Boulevard from Whyte Avenue to a mid-block crossing at 84/85 Avenues, the shared use path then crosses Gateway Boulevard and follows the streetcar corridor northwest ending at 106 Street

Mobility Analysis

Challenges:

Thoroughfares/Emergency Access Routes

The site contains Whyte Avenue and Gateway Boulevard, two of Strathcona's high traffic thoroughfares and main routes for emergency services

East-West Connections

The site suffers from a lack of east/west connections for all modes of transportation. The CP rail yard currently acts as a hard wall along Gateway Boulevard. Possible future connections that are identified in the Strathcona ARP include:

- 86 Avenue
- 85 Avenue
- 84 Avenue
- The alley between 84 and 83 Avenues
- 80 Avenue

North-South Connections

The site does not contain an inviting/safe connection for pedestrians and active transportation users to access the river valley from south of Whyte Avenue. The provincially protected high speed rail corridor which runs from the north side of Whyte Avenue between Gateway Boulevard and 102 Street to Calgary is currently underused

Transit Infrastructure

The south-side bike grid has two separated bike lanes that are disconnected through the site, and could be connected in the future:

- 76 Avenue
- 100 Street

Walkability Elements

Arterial Buffering

Whyte Avenue and Gateway Boulevard do not possess adequate buffering to provide a comfortable environment for pedestrians. While both streets feature parallel parking as buffer from the sidewalk to the street, they do not meet the standards for the public realm set by the *Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards (2018)*

Missing Sidewalks

Impeding walkability throughout the site are many missing sidewalks. Areas identified with missing sidewalks include:

- The east side of Gateway Boulevard
- Multiple areas within West Ritchie

Crosswalks

While many of the site's crosswalks have some form of a pedestrian control device, they are poorly defined and not well lit

Summary Analysis

While the area has significant active transportation connections on its periphery, and its grid-street pattern allows for internal connections, the area is disconnected from its surroundings. The site does not contain inviting north-south connections to access the River Valley, and a protected rail corridor that runs north-south is currently vacant.

The area also suffers from a lack of east-west connections, with Gateway Boulevard and the CP Rail yards acting as barriers. Gateway Boulevard does not possess adequate buffering to provide a comfortable environment for pedestrians, and does not meet complete streets standards. Significant sidewalks are also missing throughout the area, impeding walkability, and many of the site's crosswalks are poorly defined and not adequately lit. A lack of wayfinding signage throughout the area further impedes walkability.



Figure 5.11: Bike infrastructure is available in Gateway/West Ritchie, but is not well connected

Mobility Infrastructure

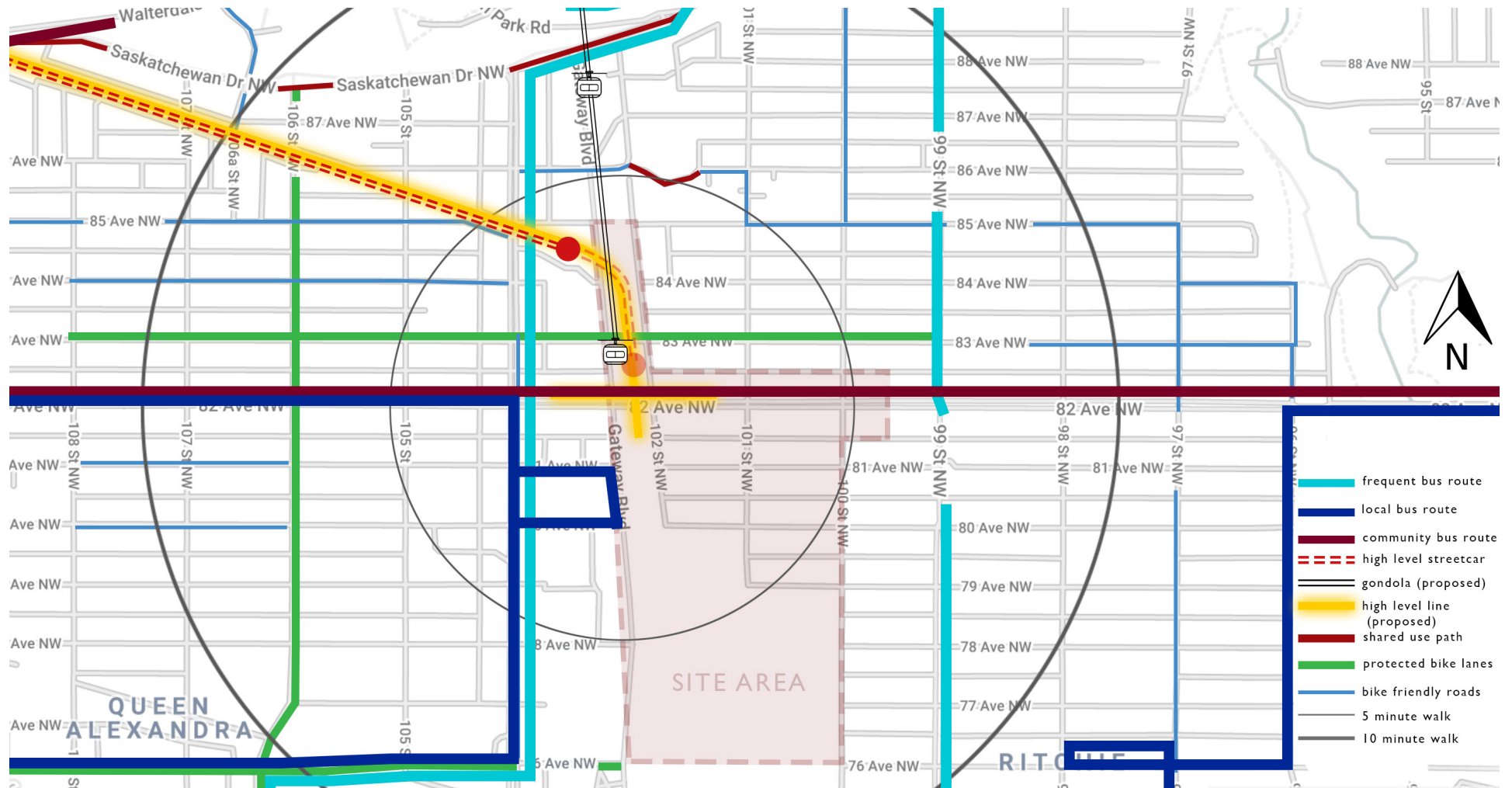


Figure 5.12: Mobility infrastructure in Gateway/West Ritchie, including three relevant proposals: The High Level Line, Prairie Sky Gondola, and Streetcar Extension

Mobility Findings



Figure 5.13: Multiple shared-use paths and protected bike lanes exist in close proximity to the area.

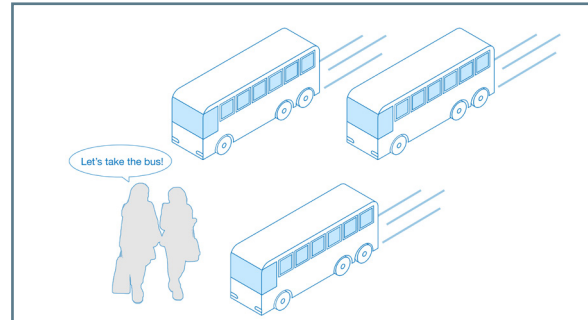


Figure 5.14: The area is heavily served by public transit.

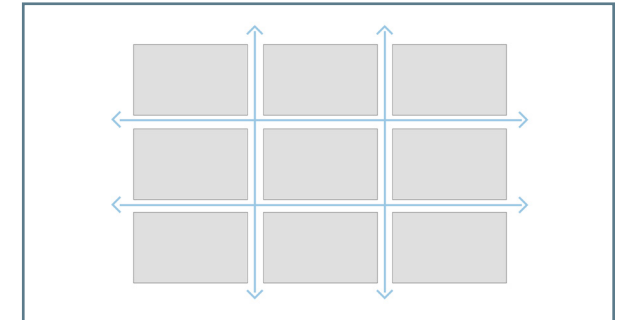


Figure 5.15: Grid street pattern allows for good connectivity within the area.

THE GOOD

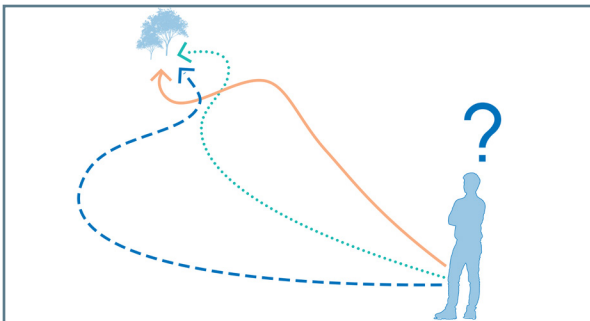


Figure 5.16: Lack of wayfinding signage leaves pedestrians confused.

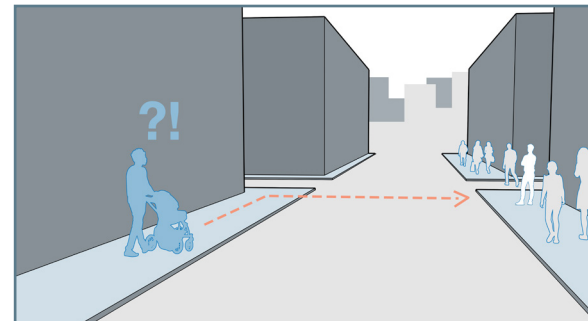


Figure 5.17: Missing sidewalks frustrate pedestrians and disconnect the area.

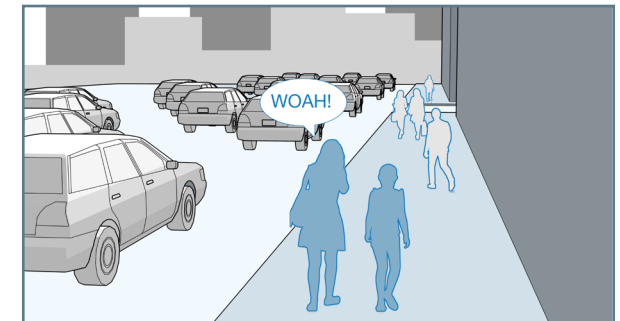


Figure 5.18: Poor buffer between arterial roads and pedestrians creates a hostile environment.

THE BAD

Building Inventory Analysis

A building inventory analysis was completed to understand the background and current conditions of buildings in the site area. The building inventory analysis had two distinct steps that allowed for data collection on individual buildings:

- Collection of observational information on buildings in the area during the site visit, including historically designated buildings and landmarks, as well as patterns in building design and condition
- Collection of building information from City planning staff in the Local Economy section. The information covered historic designations, grants distributed, and development permits.

Historic designations provide certainty on which site buildings will have a lasting impact on the area's character, and denote architectural features that are important to reflect in future developments so that the area's character can be continuous. Further, collecting data on grants and development permits helps to highlight opportunities that exist for buildings in the site area and anticipate how the area may change over time.



Figure 5.19: The Canadian Pacific Railway Station



Figure 5.20: Ardnt's Machinery Shop



Figure 5.21: The Minchau Blacksmith Shop

Building Inventory

Analysis

Strengths

Heritage Buildings/Landmarks

Buildings that provide the area with a unique character and that are easily identified as distinguishable landmarks include:

- The Roots On Whyte Community Building
- The Canadian Pacific Rail Station 1
- Arndt's Machinery Shop
- The Minchau Blacksmith Shop
- Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Historic Architectural Features

81 Avenue establishes a unique character through multiple buildings incorporating false facade storefront design. West Ritchie's historical character represents a simple utilitarian design that was typical of light industrial areas in the 1930's and 1940's.

Mixed Use Buildings

Gateway/West Ritchie is a mixed use node with a variety of uses within close proximity. This mixture of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses coexist together and make the area unique and different compared to surrounding neighborhoods.

Business Improvement Area (Grants and Incentives)

Many businesses have successfully utilized the Storefront Improvement Grant within the area that creates more vibrant and aesthetically pleasing storefronts. Businesses that have not utilized the grant are able to in the future, being that Gateway/West Ritchie falls within the Old Strathcona Business Improvement Area. Buildings that have heritage designation have further access to grants and incentives at the municipal and provincial levels.



Figure 5.22: The built form and massing have distinct character and aesthetic

Building Inventory

Analysis

Challenges

CP Railyards

Currently, the CP Rail Yard would need a significant amount of infrastructure for development of the site. This would require a large capital injection and would promise to have positive economic externalities for the area, however, negotiating to ensure that public space and public life are not negatively impacted is essential for the broader area to thrive.

Continuity

Built form in the area lacks continuity. Derelict and underutilized sites take away from the character of West Ritchie and the overall perception of the site.

The Station on Whyte

The Station, a development along 102 Street and spans from Whyte Avenue to 80 Avenue, exhibits undesirable built form for the area. The building blocks a view corridor to the Canadian Pacific Rail Station on 81st Ave and creates a disconnection to the historic CP Station.

Summary Analysis

West Ritchie and surrounding areas are prominent communities with distinct character and heritage attributes. The area between 79 Avenue and Whyte Avenue has a variety of uses and types of buildings, including coffee shops, general services shops, multi-family complexes, and single-family homes. Consequently, there is a mix of zones throughout the site area with CB2, RA7, and DC2 zones being the majority.

A mixture of building typologies exist in the community. The general characteristics include a modern variation of commercial and residential buildings showcasing a simple utilitarian design representative of a light industrial boomtown. The Arndt's Machine Shop (Narayanni's) and the modern Ace Coffee Roastery represent these characteristics. Other distinguished heritage character buildings include the Canadian Pacific Rail Station on the west portion of the

site, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Minchau Black Smith Shop.

The existing CP Railyards are vacant of any commercial and/or residential buildings, and represent a blank canvas with opportunity for redevelopment. The cost of development could be high, however, given that the site has minimal infrastructure and potentially contains a high level of contamination.

To the north of the site, there is further under-utilized land north of Whyte Avenue and east of Gateway Boulevard. The land here currently accompanies a used car dealership, a public bathroom, and non-accessory parking lots that are used for the farmer's market each Saturday.

Building Inventory

Significant Heritage Properties

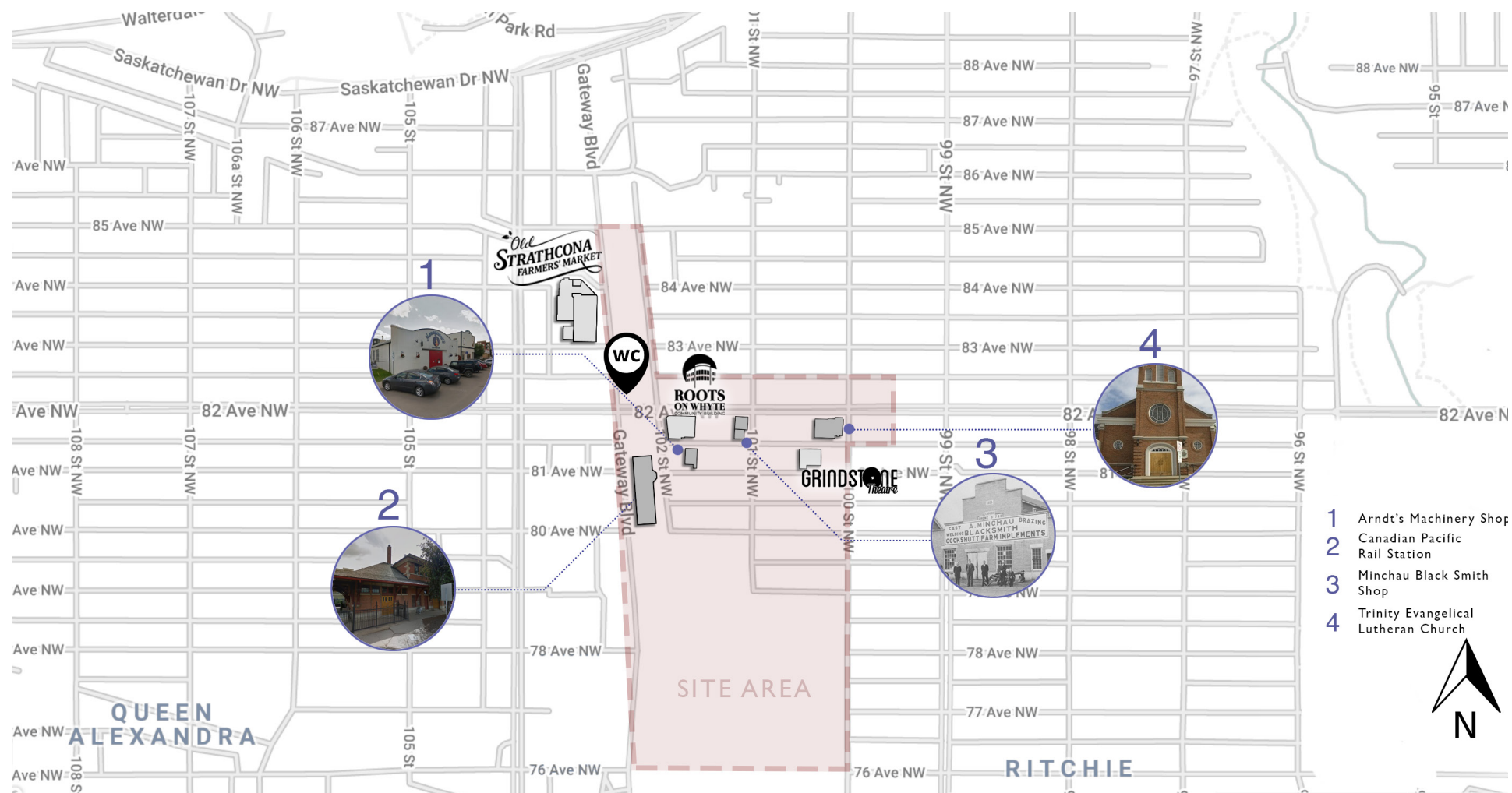


Figure 5.23: Significant heritage properties in Gateway/West Ritchie

Urban Design Analysis

Methodology

An Urban Design Analysis was completed to assess site features that have an impact on pedestrian experience and active transportation. The following features were assessed: Massing characteristics, Sun and Wind impacts, Street Life and Open Space impacts.

The following analysis was informed by observations collected during the site visit, and in reference to key policy documents including PlanWhyte, the Strathcona ARP, and the Strathcona Junction ARP. Observations were verified using Google Maps, Google Streetview, and SLIM.



Figure 5.24: No sidewalks lining Gateway Boulevard create a hostile environment

Strengths

Mainstreet Scale

The built form and massing of development contributes to an area's sense of place and pedestrian experience. The existing massing in Gateway/West Ritchie features 1-4 story building heights, an abundance of buildings situated directly on the lot line, and narrow 2 lane roadways, framing the street and creating a pleasant pedestrian environment.

Defining Character

Gateway/West Ritchie has a distinct character, influenced by the area's boomtown origins and the unique attributes of the Old Strathcona area.

Sunlight and Wind

The 1-4 story built form allows an abundance of sunlight to be felt on the street, setting the stage for an enjoyable pedestrian environment and outdoor activities such as patios and passive strolling. This built form also reduces ground level wind felt by pedestrians as they walk throughout the area.

Boulevard Trees

The site has a number of significant mature trees lining the streets, growing more apparent as the site extends into West Ritchie.

Street Frontages

Many of the buildings located within Gateway/West Ritchie has commercial uses on the ground floor, fronting onto the street. This promotes street activity and provides space for people to “pop-in” and retreat during the colder months.

Unique Vistas

The grid-street pattern allows for unique vistas for pedestrians walking in the area.

CP Railyards

The CP Railyard presents a “blank canvas” for development, allowing for unique urban design and innovative urban design.

Urban Design Analysis

Challenges

Inconsistent Massing Along Whyte Avenue

As the area extends east, the defining massing characteristics along Whyte Avenue have less of a prominence and the distinct character of Whyte Avenue is lost.

Fragmented Streetwall

The area features several surface parking lots that break the consistent streetwall and detract from the pedestrian experience and sense of enclosure.

Street Furniture

The area lacks a significant amount of street furnishings and places to sit or relax, taking away from the ability of people to linger. This affects the pedestrian experience and discourages people from staying in the area.

Building Condition

Many of the buildings in the area have fallen into disrepair, detracting from an attractive pedestrian experience. Some facades have weathered over time and no longer represent the distinct character of the area.

Alleyways

Alleys in the area lack sufficient lighting and road treatments, creating an unsafe and unattractive environment. Some buildings front into the alley, however the alley is in disrepair and discourages pedestrians from venturing down.

Open Space

The area lacks a significant amount of open space for people to linger in. Where there is open space, it is either privately owned, or poorly designed and in disrepair. Open spaces in the surrounding areas are not well connected to the site, leaving no spaces for lingering and exploring in the area.



Figure 5.25: A lack of street furniture creates a hostile pedestrian environment

Urban Design Findings

THE GOOD

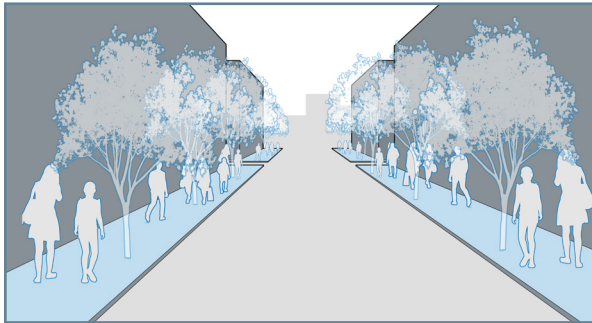


Figure 5.26: Boulevard trees and massing frame the street, creating a more human-scale environment

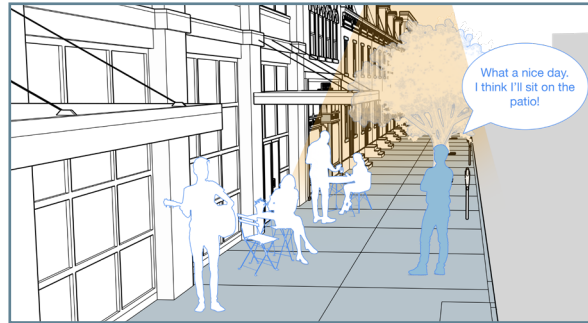


Figure 5.27: Sunlight exposure and attractive, open frontages allow for outdoor activity in some areas

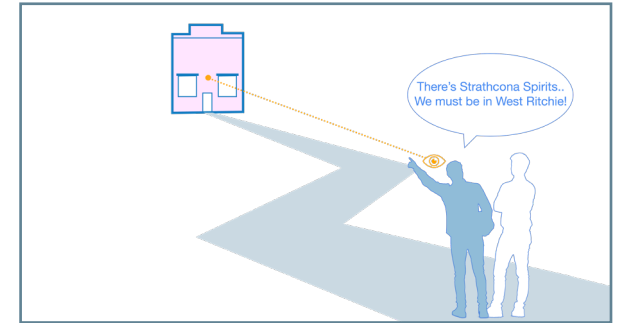


Figure 5.28: Character buildings help define the area as a distinct district

THE BAD

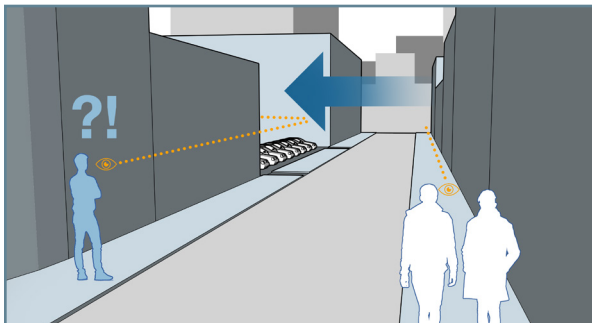


Figure 5.29: Surface parking lots break up the streetwall and disconnect the area

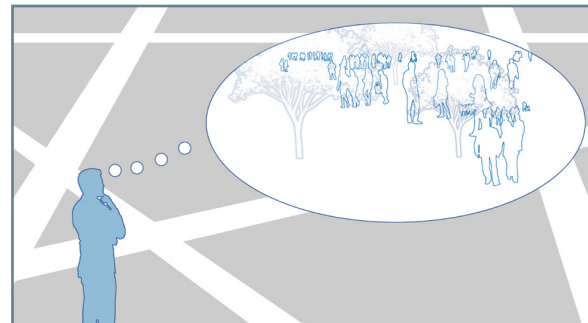


Figure 5.30: Few spaces for lingering detract pedestrians from staying in the area.

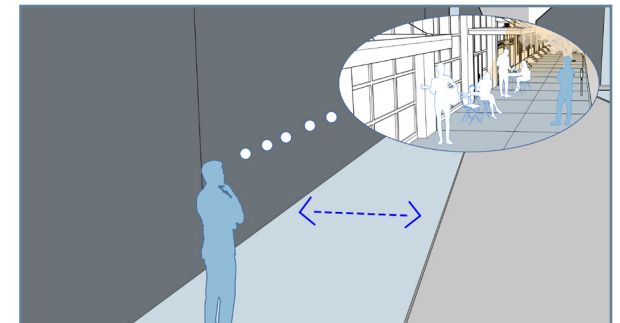


Figure 5.31: Some sidewalks are not wide enough to allow for outdoor activity

Urban Design

Summary Analysis

Summary

The Gateway/West Ritchie area's significant character has developed over the years as one of Edmonton's oldest communities. The height and scale of buildings followed development over the years from 1-2 story wood structures to larger brick buildings. Buildings range from 1-4 stories, situated to the front property line, with multiple street-facing entrances and narrow frontages. Gateway/West Ritchie's built form and defining urban design characteristics have become a part of the identity of the wider Old Strathcona area. The area features a fine grained grid-street layout, enhancing connections and promoting greater social interconnection and interaction, as well as an abundance of boulevard trees. Traditional building materials such as wood, brick and wrought iron contribute to the area's defining character. Previous boom-town development, false facades and Edwardian architecture also contribute to the distinct character of the area.

The built form and massing of development contributes to an area's sense of place and pedestrian experience. The existing massing in Gateway/West Ritchie frames the street and creates a pleasant pedestrian environment. However, the area features several surface parking lots that break the consistent streetwall and take away from the pedestrian experience and sense of enclosure.

Certain elements detract from the enjoyable pedestrian experience described above. Street furnishing and places to sit and relax are absent and take away from the ability of people to linger. Open spaces are not abundant in the site area and fail to connect to open spaces in the immediate vicinity. Little room is allocated on some streets for outdoor patios, and alleyways are dark and unattractive.

The pedestrian experience is concentrated on Whyte Avenue, and pedestrians are discouraged to be drawn to the east of Gateway Boulevard. While most buildings are located on the lot line, some are graded so that they are disconnected from the street. A number of buildings have also fallen into disrepair, detracting from an attractive pedestrian experience.



Figure 5.32: The pedestrian experience on Whyte Avenue lacks street furniture and adequate public realm



Appendices B

what we heard report

Design Charrette

Main Themes

Linear Park / Grand Boulevard

A recurring theme throughout the design charrette was the desire for a linear park or grand boulevard along the protected rail corridor. Groups expressed that this would knit disconnected communities together, and build upon the gondola, High Level Line, and Streetcar extension developments. Charrette groups came up with different ideas for the linear park, but they all centered around the need for green space and active uses along the corridor. Groups mentioned that the development of a linear park would connect other open spaces in the area, and act as a spine for development of the CP Railyards.

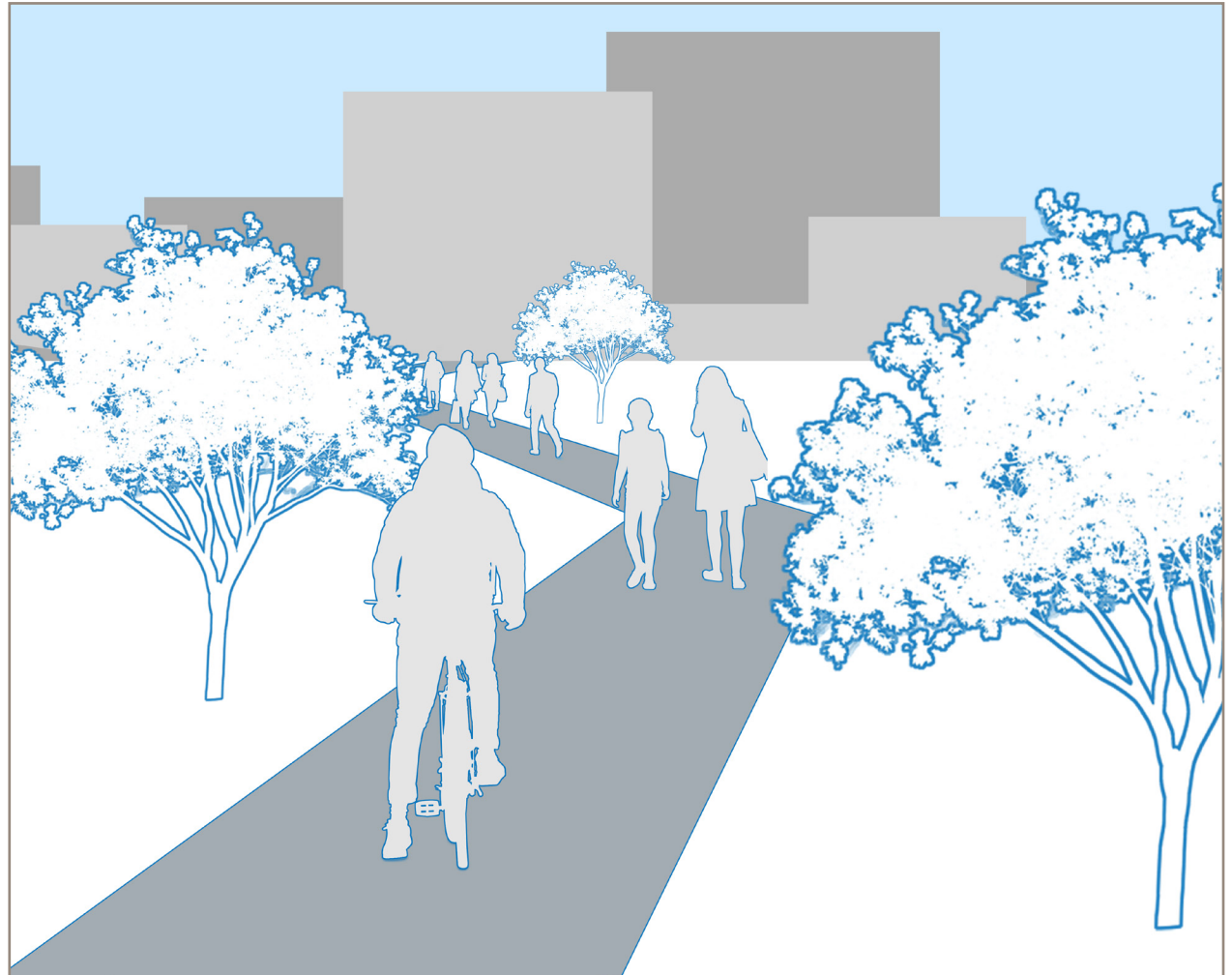


Figure 6.1: Groups expressed the desire for a grand boulevard with greenery and shared use paths

Design Charrette

Main Themes

81 Avenue as a Main Street

Throughout the charrette, groups identified 81 Avenue as a significant street for the Gateway/West Ritchie area. Attendees suggested that 81 Avenue should continue across 99 Street. It was expressed that 81 Avenue could become a significant anchor point for Gateway/West Ritchie, as it already has the elements of a great street. As the street develops, groups emphasized the need to consider massing, scale, and adherence to main street design guidelines. Groups also emphasized the need to consider sightlines; 81 Avenue has a significant sightline towards the historic CN Railway Station 1 to the west, however this is blocked by an imposing development. Future development needs to consider these factors.

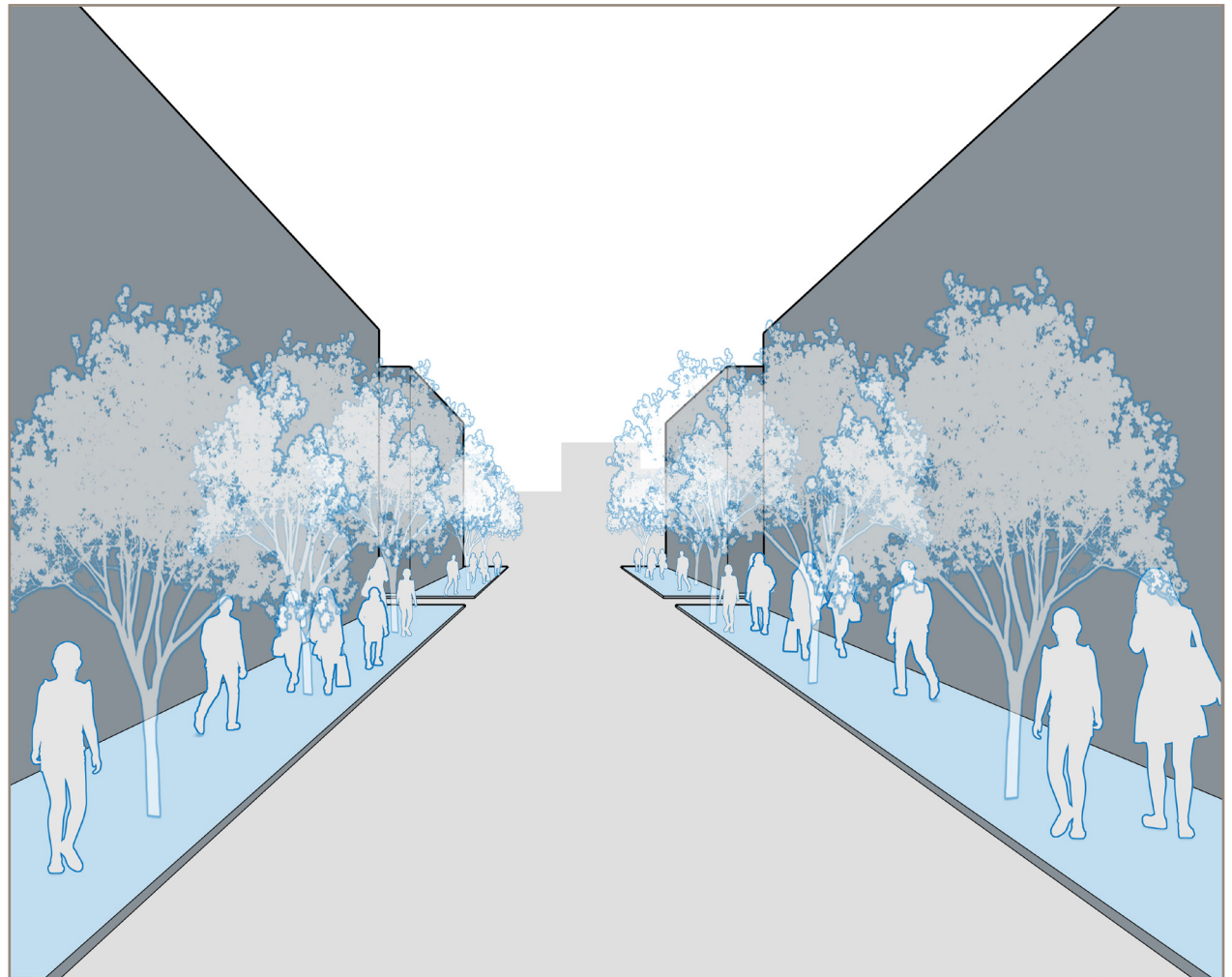


Figure 6.2: Groups expressed the desire 81 Avenue to act as a main street for Gateway/West Ritchie

Design Charrette

Main Themes

East-West Connections

All groups mentioned the need for establishing east-west connections throughout the area, and within the area to the greater Strathcona community. Groups expressed that the protected rail corridor, CP Railyards, and Gateway Boulevard act as barriers for connectivity between Gateway/West Ritchie and the areas to the west. Ideas around how to establish these connections included:

- Pedestrian connections across Gateway Boulevard to the Old Strathcona Farmer's Market from the parking lot to its east.
- 76 Avenue as a significant connection for pedestrians, bicyclists, and potential vehicles across the CP Railyards.
- Encouraging a fine-grained grid-street pattern throughout the CP Railyards to emphasize both north-south and east-west connections.

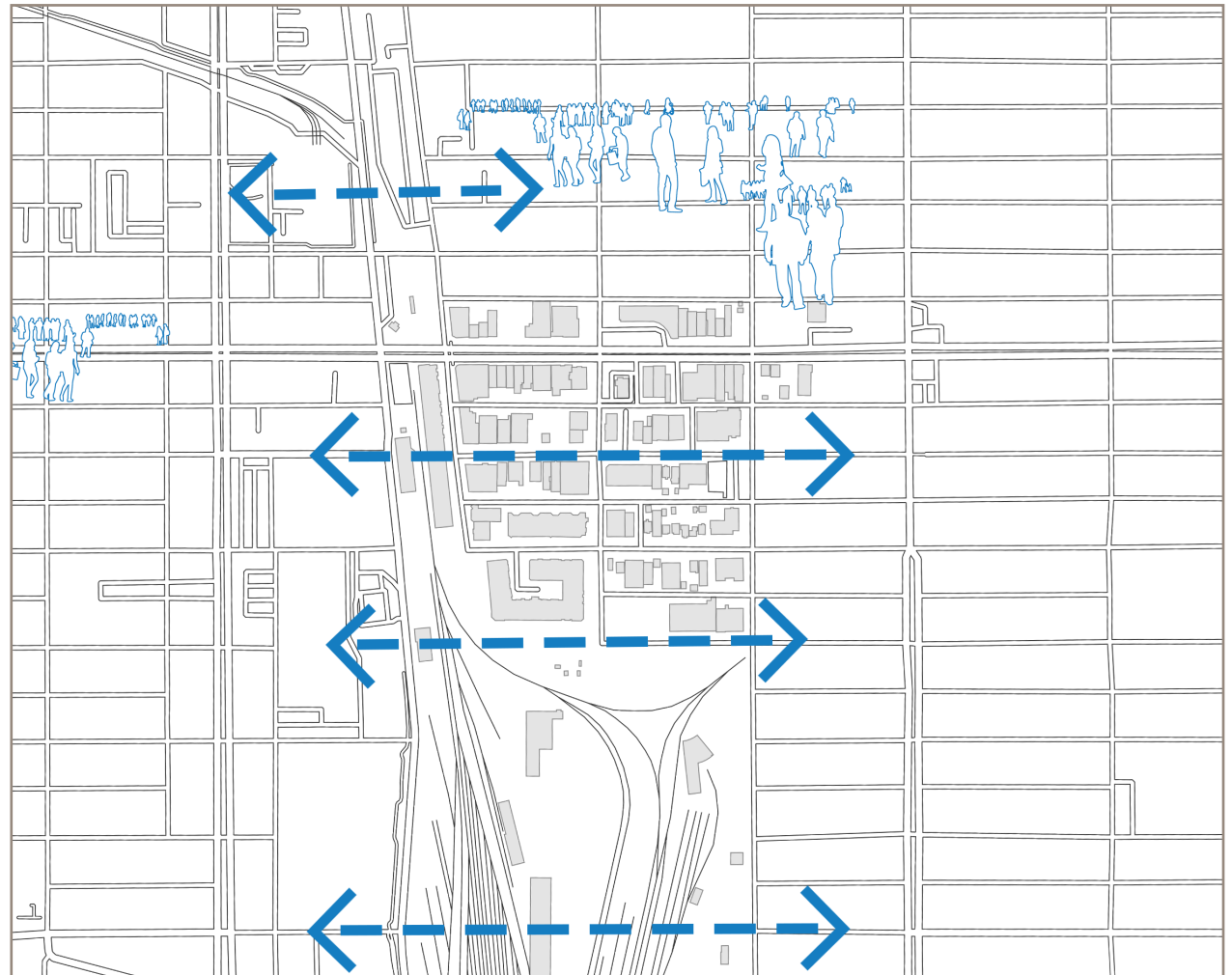


Figure 6.3: East-West connections were identified as a significant challenge for the area

Design Charrette

Main Themes

North-South Connections

In addition to the lack of east-west connections identified, groups identified a lack of north-south connections. Groups mentioned the crosswalks across Whyte Avenue at Gateway Boulevard were unsafe, and that there is a lacking connection between the north end of Whyte Avenue to the West Ritchie area in the south. Groups emphasized the need for prominent north-south streets, as these receive the most amount of sunlight during the day. It was suggested that Gateway Boulevard does not function as an adequate north-south connection because of the lack of buffering between vehicles and pedestrians. Suggestions for better connectivity included:

- A linear park along the protected rail corridor.
- Connections to the bike network.
- Greater streetscape improvements on north-south streets entering the area.

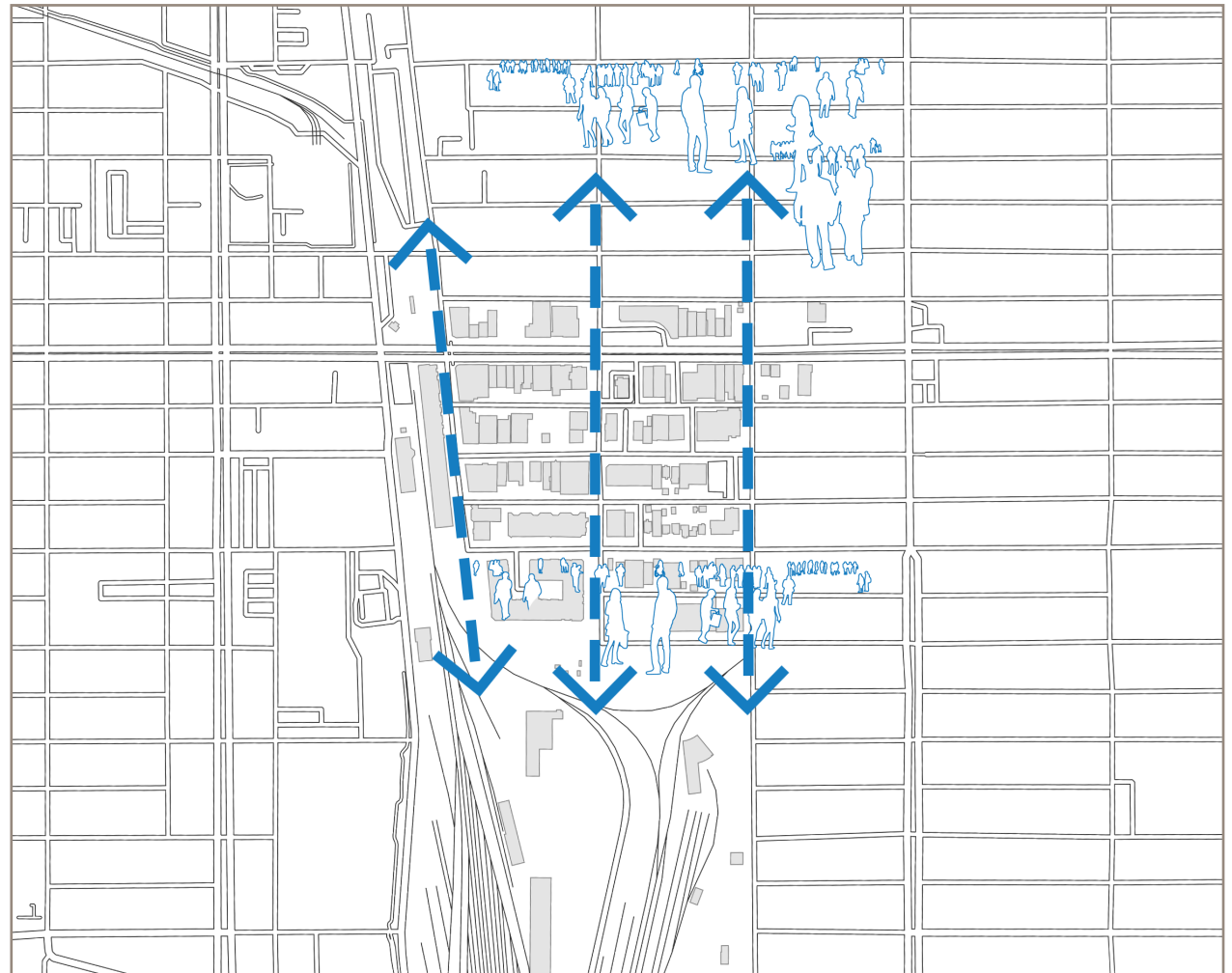


Figure 6.4: North-South connections were also identified as a challenge for the area

Design Charrette

Main Themes

Better, Connected Open Spaces

Throughout the charrette it was expressed that Gateway/West Ritchie needs to both emphasize its existing open space, create new space, and better connect the open space in the area to those outside of the area. Groups looked to the vibrancy created during the International Fringe Festival, where festival goers would bounce between shows, as inspiration for facilitating people to bounce between open spaces. Groups also emphasized the need to explore enhancing the existing open space north of the CP Rail Station 1, at Whyte Avenue and Gateway Boulevard. The linear park proposal was thought of as a key connection for open space in the Gateway/West Ritchie and Old Strathcona areas.

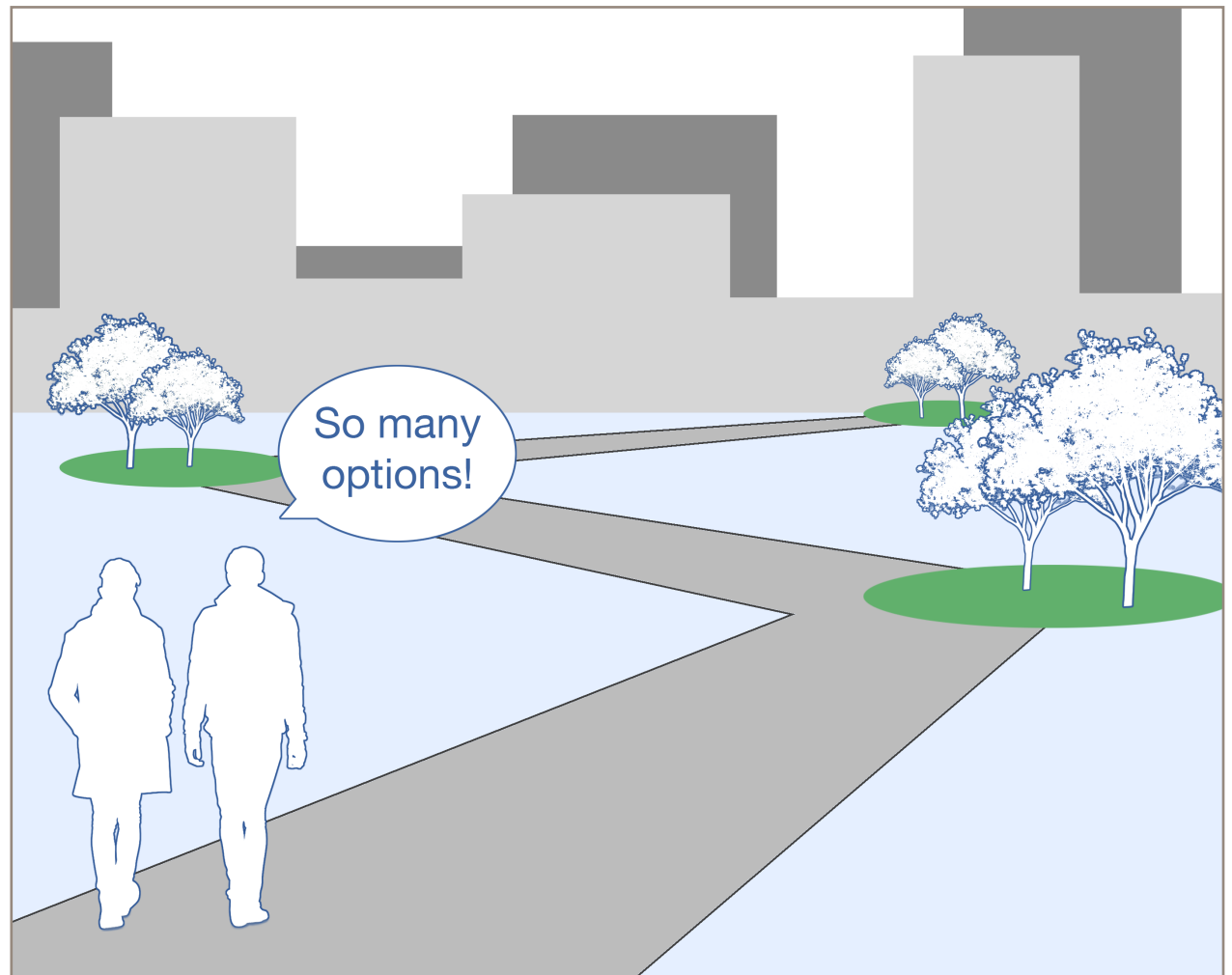


Figure 6.5: Groups identified the need for more connected open spaces

Design Charrette

Main Themes

Farmers' Market Plaza

Groups identified the parking lot to the east of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market as a great opportunity for a public plaza. The plaza would serve as both an extension of the farmers' market and an active public space for festivals. Groups identified the need for active commercial development around the plaza, as well as the need for buffering between the plaza and Gateway Boulevard. Groups also identified the need for the plaza to connect to the Farmers' Market across Gateway Boulevard. Working off of the idea of a linear park space along the protected rail corridor, groups identified a plaza as an ideal feature of the linear park.



Figure 6.6: A plaza space on the surface level parking lot on 83 Avenue and Gateway Boulevard was identified as important for the area

Design Charrette

Main Themes

CP Railyards Development

Groups identified the CP Railyards as a “blank canvas” for development, but also noted that because it is private land there are limitations on what can be regulated. It was expressed that the CP Railyards should continue the grid-street pattern of Gateway/West Ritchie, and consider a linear park as the spine for development. All groups identified the rail corridor linear park as an aspect of development in the CP Railyards, but there was some differing opinions around what built form should take place in the area. All groups, however, mentioned that development in the CP Railyards should emphasize density, connection, and open space.

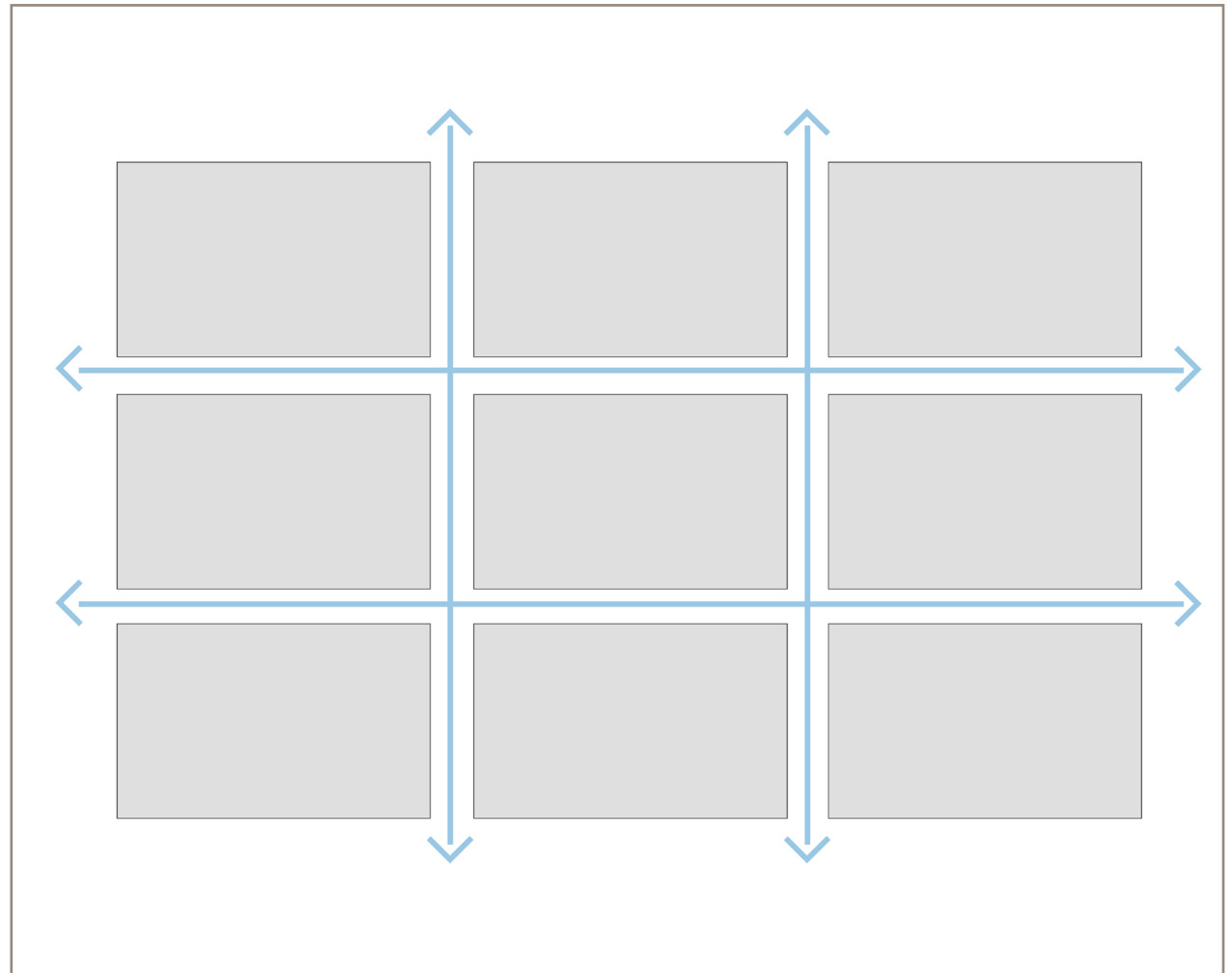


Figure 6.7: The CP Railyards were identified as a exciting development opportunity, but groups stressed the need for connectivity in the area

Design Charrette

Main Themes

Pedestrian Experience

All groups identified the need for a better pedestrian experience through the area. While groups mentioned the good base that Gateway/West Ritchie has, they expressed the need for more seating and better connections for pedestrians. They also expressed the need to consider sunlight as development occurs, and reallocate space given to vehicles to pedestrians. Ideas on how to do this included:

- Closing Whyte Avenue to vehicles for a period of time.
- Enhanced streetscaping on main streets.
- Safer crosswalks .
- Continuing boulevard trees and green space into new development.
- More seating throughout the area.

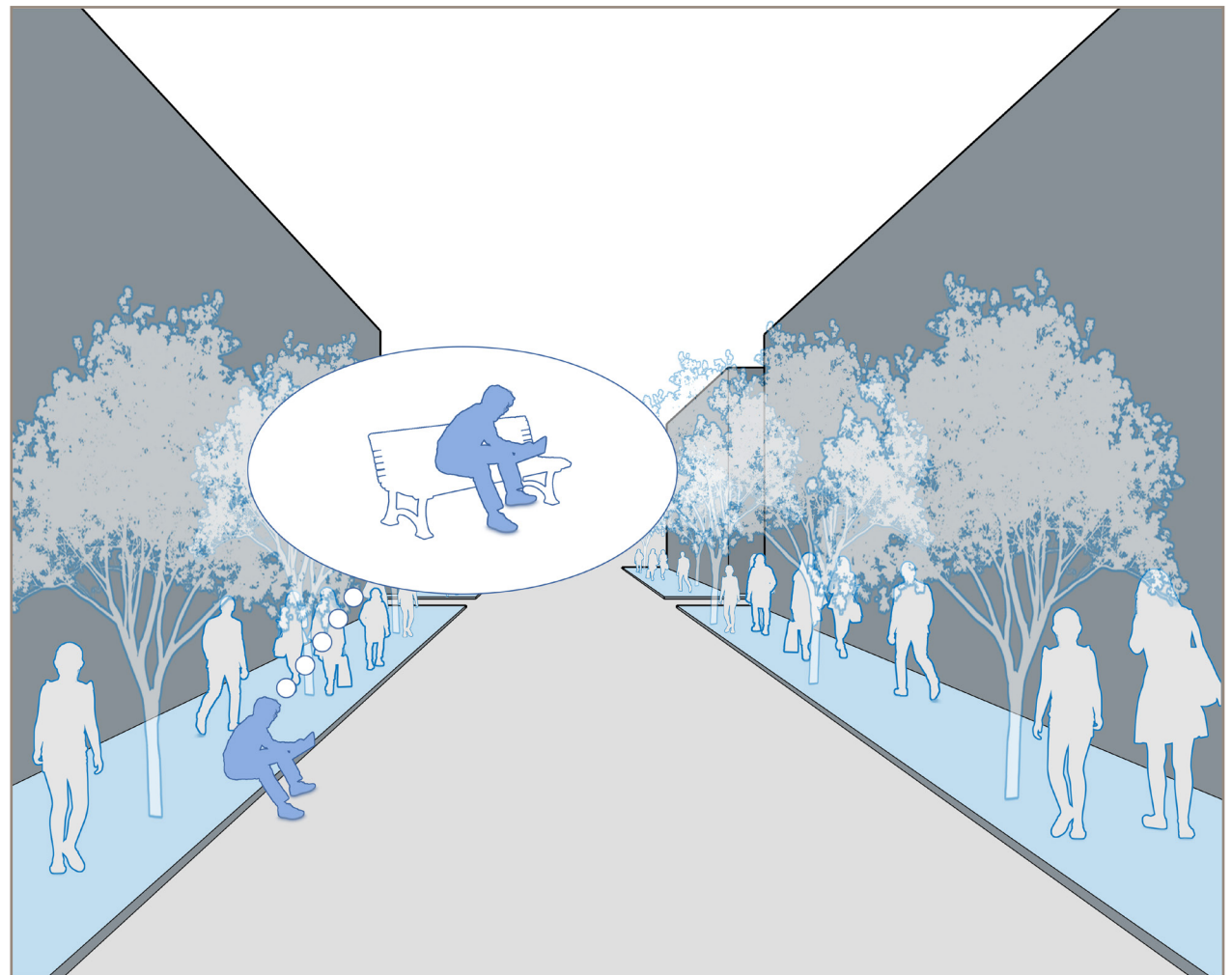


Figure 6.8: A lack of street furniture was identified as a challenge for the area

Targeted Stakeholder Meetings (Round 1)

Main Themes

The following themes were identified during the stakeholder meetings conducted in **Phase 1: Visioning & Analysis**:

- West Ritchie's unique character should be retained and the mix of uses in the area should be preserved;
- Connections should be facilitated through the site are to Whyte Avenue for a more interconnected community;
- The negative area perception should be improved through addressing the derelict, non-continuous, run down built form.
- A comfortable environment should be created through lighting, seating, and greenery.
- Community initiatives should be incorporated into the plan so that tangible results can be achieved.
- The idea that, "investment spurs investment," should be used to encourage public realm improvement.
- Local champions should be encouraged to improve their properties, with the idea that neighbour's will follow (neighbourhoods often follow in the steps of successful community stakeholders and actors).
- Community grants should be advocated for that will improve the Old Strathcona Business Improvement Area.
- A purpose built Farmers' Market, and food hall, should be considered as a possible future building on the City parking lot.
- The southern most City parking should be evaluated for a multi-modal transportation hub.
- Structured programming and events should be created that will create a desirable community for everyone.
- Criminal activity should be mitigated with public realm improvement. Initiatives and design recommendations should improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians in the area.

Targeted Stakeholder Meetings (Round 2)

Main Themes

The following themes were identified during the stakeholder meetings conducted in **Phase 3: Gathering Input:**

- Any development of the City parking lots should give consideration to the potential impacts of the Farmers' Market's viability.
- Parking and amenities are difficult for patrons of businesses to locate and should be addressed with wayfinding.
- Sidewalk and public realm improvement within West Ritchie would act as an incentive for further development of the area
- Cycling infrastructure should be built throughout the area, including additional bike lanes along 80 Avenue and 102 Street.
- Safe connections throughout the community would be useful, this will improve pedestrians perception of safety and comfortability within the community.
- The rich history of West Ritchie should be highlighted through a creative naming scheme or a historical walking tour. These initiatives could enhance and give recognition to the character of the community.
- New east/west pedestrian connections would improve the community, like an 80th Avenue pedestrian crossing or a complete 76 Avenue cycle crossing.
- Gateway Boulevard should be envisioned to become a pedestrian first street, with emphasis on the public realm between 80 Avenue and 82 Avenue.
- Wayfinding should be considered as an effective way to generate foot traffic to the local shops and businesses.
- The Placemaking Toolkit would be an effective way of encouraging community building participation.
- Straightforward applications and development approval should be advocated for so that businesses can implement the recommendations requiring them; if results are troublesome to achieve due to City of Edmonton regulation, community buy-in will be minimal.
- Creation of a safe, comfortable environment would be achieved with with increased patrol and improved public realm.

Open House and Business Outreach Surveys

Main Themes

The following themes were identified through the **Open House** and **Business Outreach Surveys** conducted:

- West Richie currently fosters a great sense of community.
- Connectivity throughout the area needs to be improved. Events, items, or businesses that attract people into the neighbourhood are desirable.
- Criminal and transient behaviour has increased over the last couple years, creating an uncomfortable and unattractive environment.
- Parking is seen to be an issue, getting rid of parking in the community would consequently impact all adjacent businesses.
- Final vision of the Public Spaces, Public Life Plan cannot disregard vehicular traffic, it's essential for the business in the community.
- Neighborhood's Infrastructure is not sufficient, due to the constant development in the area. Sidewalks need to be improved.
- Many businesses have not heard of the Storefront Improvement Grant or the Storefront Refresh Program.
- Businesses have tried to participate in placemaking initiatives, but the City processes are too cumbersome, and therefore, undesirable to participate in.
- Showing the financial gain or externalities with the short term events and initiatives would be very beneficial.
- Alternative traffic routes for the wider community would be desirable and would improve many of the underlying issues in the neighbourhood.
- 80 Avenue should be the main street as it has a direct, unblocked connection to 99 Street and Gateway Boulevard.
- Linear Park is a great way to connect pedestrians to the River Valley from Old Strathcona.
- Strategies should focus on revitalization and creating existing parks before creating new public places.

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Appendices C

case studies

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

City of Atlanta: Broad Street Boardwalk

The Atlanta City Studio, a pop-up urban design studio within the City of Atlanta's Department of City Planning, has the mission to provide leadership in the design of the city through the creation of an exceptional public realm. One of their current projects, Broad Street Boardwalk, is a long-term pilot to test the transformation of the roadway into a pedestrian plaza. The overarching goals of the project are to improve street safety and to transform the street into a vibrant, attractive place that benefits the community and businesses alike.

City of Charlotte: Paint the Pavement Program

The City of Charlotte "Paint to Pavement" program allows neighbourhood associations, community organizations, and business groups or individuals sponsored by a neighbourhood association to apply for a painted crosswalk. The Paint to Pavement Program is seen as an important way for Charlotte residents to participate in placemaking projects together and to strengthen community bonds. Eligible projects include Intersections, crosswalks, and midblock crossing that carry fewer than 10,000 vehicles on an average day.

There are a number of requirements for the applicant to fulfill. This includes: an application form, a map of the location, a design scheme, resumes of participating designers, letters of support from neighbouring organizations, a petition of support from abutting property owners, a temporary infrastructure agreement, and a temporary traffic control plan. An ongoing theme is community buy-in. For example, the applicant is responsible for inviting out all neighbouring properties, community organizations, and business owners to the installation of the program.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

City of Detroit: Revolve

Revolve Detroit was launched in 2012 by the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation in collaboration with artists, business owners, community organizations, and locals. Revolve encourages pop up retail (defined as a temporary use in an underutilized space) in the Detroit neighbourhood business district over a one month lease. The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation supports vendors by allowing access to financial assistance, providing technical assistance to find a site, and to help with business planning and permitting. The Program Manager has explained that the partnership component of the project allows vendors to create the business they imagined, and remains the most important component of the program.

City of London: London Bridge Place Identity Project

The London Bridge district is located in London along the River Thames, connecting the Financial District and a central borough. London Bridge Revealed is a place-identity project initiated by the district's business association, Team London Bridge. Research and analysis was completed by a consultant to gather perspectives from each unique stakeholder in the area. Residents and business owners were interviewed and surveyed to learn about the perceived boundaries of the district (in preference of the City's drawn lines), the attributes people care about the most, and key words and phrases that capture the area the best. The final product is an interactive website outlining events, programs, and shops located in the district.

City of Portland: Friends of Trees

Friends of Trees is a community initiative, founded in Portland, Oregon in 1989. Hosting the planting event, delivering the trees, and planting the trees are all organized by the organization. Each tree costs \$35, however, should affordability be a barrier for a neighbourhood, a donation fund covers the cost. Local wholesale tree farmers provide the trees, whereas resources (mulch, stakes, tree care tips) are provided by the organization. Community building is built into the initiative as volunteer labour is sourced from neighbourhood residents, and a potluck dinner is organized post-event. Overall, the initiative is seen as the example for local tree planting, boasting over 800,000 trees planting since 1989 in the Portland Region.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

City of San Francisco: Better Market Street Project

The Better Market Street Project has a goal to re-establish the street as a premier cultural, civic and economic centre of San Francisco and the Bay Area. The scope of the project is 2.2 miles (3.5 kilometers) and is being implemented through a quick-build program that began in January 2020. A quick-build project consists of parking and traffic modifications that are fast and relatively cheap to implement. Quick-build elements of the project include: transitioning Market Street into a car-free zone, creating 100 new cross-street passenger and commercial loading zones to accommodate safe loading, placing loading restrictions on Market Street during peak hours, extending the existing transit-only land, installing painted safety zones at eight intersections, adding bicycle intersection improvements at designated streets, and changing sections of other streets to improve safety and vehicle movement.

City of San Francisco: Pavement to Parks

Pavement to Parks is run by the City of San Francisco, representing the first Parklet Program in North America (created in 2010). The City explains, “before 2010, San Francisco streets were designed to accommodate cars more, which was unsafe and unwelcoming to pedestrians and bikers. So the Pavement to Parks Program was created in 2010 as an inexpensive and non-permanent way to turn a street parking spot into a park with benches, tables, chairs, landscaping and increased bike parking. Since 2015, more than 60 parklets have been built in San Francisco.” Widespread public support has been seen as the backbone of the program, and the willingness of the community to continue to maintain and operate Parklets.

Goals of the program include recovering road space for pedestrians and increasing active transportation for pedestrians. A publication on the Global Designing Cities Initiative shows that “the first trial Parklet in San Francisco brought a 37% increase in pedestrian traffic in the area during weeknights and a 350% increase in people walking with bikes during the weekend.” Between 2009 and 2015, 160 parking spaces have been converted (equal to 5,600 meters of roadway space) to parklets and street plazas.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

City of Seattle: Community Painted Crosswalks

Community Painted Crosswalks are community-initiated projects, receiving support from the City of Seattle Department of Transportation. The City offers resources, grant funding, and the permission needed to paint the crosswalks. Community groups can use a standardized crosswalk design or create an original design (the City may require the group to hire an artist to paint the design). Crosswalks must be at marked intersections and require vehicles to already stop. The estimated cost is \$25 per USD square foot of material (the project width, length, and the amount traffic received at the intersection are all variables that impact cost). The expected lifespan of a crosswalk is 3 to 5 years and the applicant is responsible for maintenance past this period. The Neighbourhood Matching Fund (pg. #) has been used to fund most projects.

City of Seattle: Bell Street Park Shared Street

Bell Street Park is a park-like corridor in the City of Seattle. The corridor expands four blocks and has one lane of traffic. Prior to construction Bell Street was a two-lane, one-way roadway with parallel parking. The Belltown community played an important role in ensuring the corridor was transformed into a shared street after the City looked into drawbacks of the transition. The street design focussed on recreational and ecological features and public realm activation.

In 2013, the four phased construction process began and was completed in March 2014. In October 2014, traffic was further restricted due to the continued high-volume use of the street by vehicles.

City of Seattle: Parks and Recreation Levy and Neighbourhood Matching Fund

The Parks and Recreation Levy is offered by the City of Seattle to award funding for open space and parks projects that renovate, improve, or create new open space. In 2009, the Levy received \$146 million dollars for a six year period. A Spaces' Citizens' Advisory Committee made up of community representatives makes recommendations on applicable open space and parks projects across Seattle. Recommendations are also pitched by community-based organizations. Projects can range from large-scale green space redevelopment to smaller improvements (i.e. improved lighting, upgrading washrooms, playground or picnic facilities).

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund has supported over 5000 projects across Seattle, including placemaking projects, cultural events, festivals, arts, and community gatherings. Applicants must be groups of individuals (i.e. community groups, organizations, business associations, ad-hoc groups). There are two funding streams: a small sparks fund of (up to \$5000) and a community-partnership fund (up to \$50,000). Applicants must demonstrate how the community will match the fund through cash, volunteer time, donated professional services, or in-kind donated resources. When interviewed, the Funds Program Manager suggested that businesses prefer giving money to community groups for placemaking programs, instead of to the City.

A City of Seattle Planner explained that these funds are not replacement for responsibilities the City of Seattle has. The City of Seattle must still provide a robust and well-maintained parks and open space system. These funds are seen as “in-addition to” projects. The City has observed that when people are involved in the projects, they will take better care of it.

City of Seattle: Parklet Patio Program and Streateries

The Parklet Patio Program is offered by the City of Seattle Public Space Management Team. Parklets are public spaces designed to be open 24-hours a day, replacing existing road space or parking spots. Community Groups, businesses, residents, and other interested parties apply for permits online and submit a formal application. Applicants have to provide a site-plan, design concept, a letter of authorization from a city representative, and the permit fee. Once approved and constructed, applicants are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the structure.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

Streeteries (are described as a combination of Parklets and Side-Walk Cafes) are subject to the same permitting and application process as Parklets. A Streeteries provides space for cafe seating along narrow sidewalks to support the economic health of a commercial district. When interviewed, A Public Space Management Team member suggested the project has been a success, referring to projects that have cost businesses \$60,000 USD and have been able to recover the cost in several months of the Streeteries' operation.

In 2011, the City of Seattle received a high volume of requests for Parklets. Each request had to be defined as the City did not have a formal process for application intake, nor did they have requirements and guidelines. In 2013, a Parklet Patio Pilot was launched to support the build of 3 Parklet Patios in different Seattle districts over 2 years. In 2015, the Parklet Patio Program was launched, and concurrently, the Streeteries Pilot Program was launched. The pilots were able to determine that every project needs to be community initiated and, in turn, should be denied if there is a lack of community support or if the proposed site is problematic (i.e. the site is a hill).

City of Seattle: The Planting Right of Way

The Planting Right of Way is a program run by the City of Seattle Department of Transportation. The City provides free licenses and information on preferred types of plants to empower residents to plant in the boulevard between the pedestrian right-of-way (or sidewalk) and the roadspace. These boulevards are perceived as great opportunities to grow trees, shrubs, and edible plants. The following goals underpin the program: Neighbourhood beautification, increase the food production and gardening, reducing stormwater runoff, ensuring safety and mobility of the travelling public.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

City of Toronto: King Street Transit Priority Corridor Project

The King Street Transit Priority Corridor Project aims to put people first through improved transit reliability, speed, and capacity. After the King Street Transit Pilot Project in 2017, City Council made King Street a permanent Transit Priority Corridor in 2019. The three key objectives of the project are to: move people more efficiently, support economic prosperity, and improve placemaking.

The 2017 King Street Transit Pilot Project sought to improve transit reliability, speed, and capacity on a 2.6km stretch of roadway. Through-traffic for private vehicles, including taxis, was prohibited. In phase two, the public realm was improved with installations of parklets, public art and planters in parallel parking spots. The pilot collected monthly data before, during, and after implementation on ridership, travel times, reliability, transit capacity, traffic volumes, and sales activity. A big takeaway from the project was the realisation that “traffic doesn’t stop... people shop”. Sales data indicated that the changes did not negatively impact foot traffic or sales activity.

City of Toronto: The Laneway Project

The laneway project is a not-for-profit social enterprise in Toronto that divides their work into three streams: partnering with the development and design community to improve and activate laneways, recreating municipal processes and policies to be laneway friendly, and developing resources, as well as hosting events, to inspire and support residents, community groups, businesses and other stakeholders to improve and make better use of laneways.

The organization has created how-to-guides that instruct: collaboration to revitalize your local laneway, throwing a laneway event, adding a laneway mural, greening laneways and naming laneways. They have also created a toolkit called, “Turning Laneways into Public Places,” which provides a diversity of case studies to reference.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

City of Toronto: The Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy is a City of Toronto initiative to renew neighbourhoods through social, economic, and physical condition improvement. Supporting healthy communities by activating people, resources, and neighbourhood friendly policies is the goal of the strategy. Investment from the City of Toronto is given to 31 neighbourhoods (named Neighbourhood Improvement Areas) that have historically received under-investment in social infrastructure, and have had community safety concerns.

Neighbourhood Planning Tables represent working groups in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas made up of local business, residents, city councillors and staff. Each Table creates a Neighbourhood Action Plan to identify local priority issues, and to figure out what issues should apply for

a grant (program grants are upwards of \$5000 for community events and local initiatives). A Partnership Legacy Fund is offered (upwards of \$50,000) to support community projects that use city-owned buildings or leased spaces. The City offers training on how to complete a successful grant application and offers training to build local leaders.

City of Vancouver: Green Streets Program

Green Streets is a program offered by the City of Vancouver. Vancouver residents adopt a boulevard, street median, corner bulb, traffic circle to garden on. Gardeners, or otherwise community residents, are responsible for picking the plants, and maintaining the garden for as long as they wish. The Green Streets website offers a volunteer intake form, a recommended plant list, and planting maintenance and safety guidelines. Stories of community residents are shared on the website to explain the individual and community level benefit of the program.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

The City Program Manager explained, “The program began in 1994 as a pilot project in Vancouver’s Mount Pleasant neighbourhood. The success of the project inspired other neighbourhoods to get involved and liven up their streets. The Green Streets Program has been blooming ever since- By 2006, hundreds of volunteer gardeners in 250 Green Streets gardens are expertly demonstrating what can be accomplished when neighbours are given the opportunity to have a say over the look and feel of their streets.”

City of Washington: Greenery Brochure

The Downtown DC Business Improvement District created a How2 beautify & maintain downtown trees brochure for business owners and property owners located in the district. The brochure is made to inform property owners what their responsibility is for maintaining trees and plants, compared to the responsibility of the business association and the City. The following topics are covered in the brochure: how to take care of a tree, how to apply for a tree permit (property owners in The City of Washington need a permit to prune, plant, or remove a tree) and how a property owner can adopt a tree that is off site.

City of Washington: Temporary Urbanism

The Temporary Urbanism Initiative was launched in 2010 by the City of Washington Office of Planning (the initiative is now part of the ArtPlace Grant Program). The initiative identifies vacant spaces that can be transformed into temporary retail to showcase and sell products. Vacant spaces in four arts and culture neighbourhoods are occupied for three to six months, supported by a \$75,000 grant (the grant is funded by a national private-public partnership). The Program Director explained that the goal of the program is to invite economic opportunity, decrease vacancy rates, while supporting local artists and entrepreneurs in Washington, DC.

Case Studies

Initiatives from other cities

City of Raleigh, North Carolina: Guerrilla Wayfinding

The Office of Planning provides the funding and reviews applications of short-term tenants. Short-term tenants are responsible for securing permits, leases, and liability insurance for the spaces. The application requires short-term tenants to “partner with other, ideally DC-based, organizations; line up three to five potential vacant sites with written approval from the property owners; draft a proposal and budget for the future programming; and possess relevant past experience.” The Office of Planning recognizes that for these initiatives to be successful, building-code regulations need to be suited to temporary uses.

A local Raleigh resident, Matt Tomasulo, wanted to encourage walkability within the city, so he decided to install temporary simple wayfinding signs around the city giving a brief indication of the distance and the direction. These signs were eventually taken down. However, the head of planning was fascinated with the idea of wayfinding in the City, he decided to implement a formalized wayfinding strategy throughout Raleigh that was publicly funded.



Appendices D

COVID-19 response

COVID-19

Responding to a crisis

COVID-19 arrived in Alberta on March 5th, 2020, and was declared a Public Health Emergency on March 17th, 2020. In the second month the Public Health Emergency has remained in effect, at the time of the writing of this entry, Edmontonians have been critically shaped and challenged by the uncertainty and loss from the global impacts and the localized outcomes the pandemic has had. It should be emphasized that no individual or business has been immune to this. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Edmontonians have been challenged by the delay and disruption of aspirations put on hold, the loss of livelihood and vocation tied to a local business, and chiefly the experience of loss itself for family members or loved ones.

As Edmonton recovers and rebuilds its economy post-pandemic, there will be an opportunity to reframe the dialogue on planning and design with more reflection on what planning and

design are really for. This dialogue will provide the planning practice with a framework to successfully introduce mandated health and safety measures and to determine how public space can better serve the people using it. Holding these conversations to find responsive planning and design solutions cannot be the responsibility of any one group as after all the City building process is one that is collaborative and integrated in the community itself.

Despite the many financial resources, planning tools and policies at our own disposal, few of them express directly the value they bring to public spaces, and the people in them, privy to a global pandemic. These conditions require stakeholders involved in City building practices to reflect deeply on how our existing tools, and methods for integrating those tools, are able to serve communities living in an unprecedented urban environment. To think in terms of existing practices provides an

opportunity to critique and amend knowledge we already have while being able to bring new resources, tools and policies to the municipal decision making agenda.

The 20-year vision articulated in the *The Plan* is no exception to the scenario discussed above and represents an opportunity to reflect on how our open space, mobility, transportation and public space will need to adapt to a new world order of planning and design. More influentially, *The Plan* is situated uniquely in the post-pandemic dialogue. Plenty of government reports and media coverage have focused attention discussing major challenges in society while referencing national economies, health and administration. Unaddressed in the coverage are implications a global pandemic will have on public spaces in relation to a specific time and place.

COVID-19

Responding to a crisis

The following topics have been covered to provide greater clarity on how *The Plan* can contribute to the a post-pandemic reality and how this report can be implemented effectively to address a new approach to planning and design:

1. Why good urban design is important to dealing with a pandemic
2. What Edmonton and other cities have already done to improve design for COVID-19
3. The recommendations from the report that are of most importance.

The Importance of Urban Design

Urban design has been leveraged to combat problems that arise in urban municipalities like inequality, homelessness, and uncomfortable environments and it's proven to be an exceptional tool. Urban environments have been fundamentally designed around the automobile and municipalities have dedicated more space to the car than to the pedestrian. Both the public and private realm are recipients of an uncomfortable and uninspiring pedestrian experience.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 there has been an immediate shift of how people perceive their environment and the public space that frames their experience. Good principles of urban design (wide sidewalk spaces, fine-grained narrow commercial frontages, shared architectural and identity features) promotes design that respects the pedestrian experience, allowing for

environments that are comfortable and livable for all people and businesses to easily interact. Environments with distinguishable characteristics are memorable and easy to navigate because of the space's integrated functionality.

If we proactively design our streets with fundamental urban design principles, the structural problems and demands that have arisen with the pandemic would not be hard to achieve from what is desired. If municipalities followed urban design principles, municipalities and the province would be in a better position of preparedness for a global pandemic. Municipalities that have a public realm designed for a variety of conditions have an advantage of concentrating more resources on epidemiological issues while leveraging the public realm to support the programs to support the most pending issues.

COVID-19

Initiatives from other cities

As municipalities recover from COVID-19, we will all become more prepared for the possibility of another pandemic. May that be simply improving the urban public realm through simply changes like open streets or more profound changes like urban policy systemic reform.



Figure 7.1: A drive-thru testing center in Edmonton, Alberta (Edmonton Sun)

Environmental Scan of Other Cities

In response to the necessity for physical distancing to maintain health and safety, public spaces must be able to accommodate people in a way that allows them to maintain a minimum of 2 metres from other users, far greater than ~95% of the sidewalks in Gateway/West Ritchie. As cities transform at accelerated rates to respond to the pandemic, individuals involved in city building have opportunities to test out urban design recommendations for public space through streamlined processes. While Edmonton has responded to the pandemic with the initiation of lane closures for expanded active transportation, the City should consider seizing opportunities for improving public space by piloting area specific urban design recommendations.

The environmental scan of North American municipalities highlights cities that have responded through design and placemaking strategies to support health and safety requirements. Shared woonerf style streets, bike lane expansion, and expanded parklet programs are recommendations of the Plan and have also been found to be prevalent solutions municipalities have focused on to better facilitate public life in a pandemic.

Shared Woonerf Style Streets

Reallocating roadway for multi-use is gaining momentum in many cities as a way to help provide physical distance with constrained sidewalks. Edmonton has initiated shared streets on some of its roadways, but it hasn't taken the opportunity to do so on mass as the two cities Burlington, Vermont and Oakland, California. The logic the two cities are following is that by transitioning a multitude of streets at once, the effect of creating a destination street is avoided (such as Saskatchewan Drive).

COVID-19

Initiatives from other cities

Burlington, Vermont

The City launched a phased program to create local traffic only streets, shared streets; and, parking restricted streets in select locations to widen key walking and biking corridors.

Oakland, California

The City has prioritized pedestrians and cyclists on 74 miles of roadway through a “Slow Streets” program. Soft closures of streets entail the use of construction signage noting the road is closed to through traffic. Streets are still open to local, emergency, and delivery vehicular traffic.



Figure 7.2: A “slow street” in Oakland, California (Planetizen)

Toronto, Ontario

The City has initiated “Active TO” a comprehensive approach for quiet streets, closures of major roads for active transportation, and the expansion of its cycling network

Winnipeg, Manitoba

The City has designated 9 streets as bicycle and active transportation routes from 8 am-8 pm. Vehicular traffic is limited to one block on each route and signs indicate to drivers when they have entered and exited the route.

Bike Lane Expansion

Berlin, Germany

The district of Kreuzberg temporarily widened cycling lanes and added new bike lanes in March. In light of the positive response to Kreuzberg’s pilot project, the City of Berlin created a guide for the City’s 12 other boroughs following suit.

Expanded Parklets

Dallas, Texas

The Dallas based tactical urbanism organization, Better Block, has created parklets for the City of Dallas that are wide enough to provide 2m of physical separation.



Figure 7.3: A temporary parklet in Dallas, Texas (Better Block)

COVID-19

Relationship to The Plan

Implementing The Plan: Immediate Term

Several recommendations outlined in the *Public Spaces, Public Life Plan* can be useful for creating spaces for people to spread out and stay safe:

Open Streets

As people isolate at home, physical activity outside is important to keep communities active, support mental health, and continue a connection to the environment. The sidewalk infrastructure that currently exists does not provide adequate space for people to space out and follow the 2m social distance requirements. Re-purposing car lanes as spaces for people can ensure that everyone has the space they need to enjoy their communities.

See *Open Streets* - page xxx

Temporary bike lanes

Similar to the *Open Streets* concept, the COVID-19 pandemic is a great opportunity to pilot new active transportation routes. Temporary bike lanes are a low-cost, high-impact solution for supporting active transportation while ensuring that we are physically distanced from others. Studies have shown that COVID-19 can travel further when a person is moving quickly, increasing the importance of distancing when using active transportation routes.

See *Temporary Bike Lanes* - page 119.



Figure 7.4: A pop-up bike lane in London, Ontario (*Discerning Cyclist*)

Self-guided walking tours

Isolation from others — both socially and physically — can be hard on our mental health. A great way to get out of the house and enjoy the neighbourhood, while ensuring we are distanced from others is to take a self-guided walking tour. Formatted as a brochure or as a phone application, self-guided walking tours direct individuals throughout an area with information on landmarks, art, and other interesting facts. These tours can be a great way to get the kids out of the house, and learn more about our city. ArtTourYEG currently offers self guided art tours that can be found at www.arttourneyeg.ca.

See *Self Guided Historical Walking Tours* - page 125.

COVID-19

Relationship to The Plan

Implementing The Plan: Long Term

In the long-term, Cities will need to establish robust and comprehensive redevelopment and growth plans to relaunch their economies. Gateway/ West Ritchie is again no different. Several recommendations outlined in the Public Spaces, Public Life Plan can help kickstart economic activity and recover from the damage COVID-19 has done:



Figure 7.5: A temporary parklet in Terrace, British Columbia (Terrace Standard)

Parklets and Streeteries

As we start to relaunch our economy, we need to be mindful of the steps we can take to help out small businesses — many of whom have been hit the hardest economically. Restaurants in particular will need our support. These businesses operate on extremely small margins, and our relaunch plan will likely have them reopening at 50% capacity or lower for many months. By allowing restaurants to put sidewalk cafes, patios, and tables in parking spaces outside of their establishment, we can increase the safety and viability of service. This will help restaurants recover, build up business, remain within safety and health regulations, and help us all enjoy a patio beer.

See Parklets & Streeteries - page xxx

Placemaking Toolkit

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a profound effect on the City's finances. With less money to be allocated toward neighbourhood scaled projects and initiatives, community placemaking will become increasingly important as a way to create vibrant and sustainable communities. A Placemaking Toolkit, outlining the resources and tactics available to communities and businesses can be a great way to promote community placemaking, allowing communities to take local recovery into their own hands.. This toolkit will allow our communities to create better places and take the recovery into their own hands.

See Placemaking Toolkit - page 96

COVID-19

Initiatives from other cities

Neighborhood Renewal

Targeted investment by the City will be a crucial aspect of our relaunch plan. These investments will create local jobs, spur economic activity, and help our communities recover from the pandemic. Neighbourhood Renewal in Gateway/West Ritchie has the potential to be a great example of a local investment that will create jobs, spur economic activity, and help communities recover from the pandemic while meeting the municipalities financial goals.

See Neighbourhood Renewal, page 104



Figure 7.6: Neighbourhood renewal construction in Strathcona (City of Edmonton)

Pop-up art galleries

Unfortunately, as a result of the pandemic, some businesses will be forced to close their doors indefinitely. This leaves buildings with vacant storefronts, detracting economic activity from the area and promoting crime. Arts based groups hit hard by the pandemic with festivals cancelled and galleries closed, leaving many artists with nowhere to display their work. By allowing artists to exhibit their work in empty storefronts, we can work to rebuild both our main streets and our arts community. Studies have shown that buildings with tenants are leased out faster than those with vacant units — by allowing pop-up galleries inside of vacant units, we can showcase local artist's work while promoting a businesses retail unit.

See Pop-up Art Galleries, page 116

Pop-up retail and Cafe

With physical distancing measures in place, we need to give people as much space as possible while we relaunch our economy. Traditional stores and cafes are built upon close connection with customers and staff. By allowing retail stores and cafes to establish pop-up locations in public spaces, we can increase the amount of space that people while they shop. This allows the business to increase their customer base while ensuring customers are adhering to physical distancing measures. Pop-up retail and cafes are also a great way for new businesses to test out different concepts, spurring further economic growth.

See Pop-Up Retail and Cafes, page 129

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