

JULY 25 2022



OLD STRATHCONA PLACEMAKING 2022-2023

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

vignettes.
THIRDSPACE

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

PROJECT BACKGROUND

When people feel welcome, safe, and have a place to sit and linger in main street destination districts, they spend more time and more money.

Good urban design in main street districts prioritizes the pedestrian and the cyclist over the car, and the Old Strathcona district currently fails to address this.

Over the last two summers, the Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA) has piloted temporary sidewalk expansions in two of the busiest blocks in the area, and provided seating and tables. Survey results from last year's pilot showed very positive feedback and a desire for more permanent changes.

To this effect, the Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA) has received funding from the Government of Canada (Prairies Economic Development Canada) to design and build a series of bike racks, benches, and parklets for permanent installation in the Old Strathcona Business Improvement Area.

The OSBA is working with Edmonton based Thirdspace Design Group to design and manufacture custom infrastructure that will be manufactured locally.

We aim to have a positive economic impact through permanent infrastructure upgrades to attract new business, retain current businesses, and attract more people back to the Old Strathcona district.

METHODOLOGY

Engagement was necessary in this project to determine ideal locations, design parameters, and involve the community in infrastructure decisions that impact their experience.

Engagement for the project was conducted over the course of May, June, and July 2022. The following engagement activities were completed:

A public survey was administered through Google Forms. This survey asked visitors to the Old Strathcona area their thoughts on where infrastructure should be placed, desired design parameters and features, and where infrastructure upgrades may not be needed.

A business specific survey was administered through Google Forms. This survey asked businesses in the Old Strathcona area their thoughts on where infrastructure should be placed, desired design parameters and features, and where infrastructure upgrades may not be needed.

Stakeholder meetings were conducted with industry experts, non-profit groups, and government stakeholders relevant to the project to gather their knowledge and industry-specific recommendations. Stakeholders that were engaged are outlined further in this report.

A full list of survey questions and data can be made available through request.

PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

Visitors to Old Strathcona were asked where they would like to see new benches, bike racks, and parklets in the district — as well as what design features they would like to see.

The public survey was distributed through the Old Strathcona Business Association's social media channels, as well as through direct email communication. The survey was open for a total of 2 weeks, and we recieved a total of 129 responses. After analysis, the following general themes and comments were determined:

Demographics

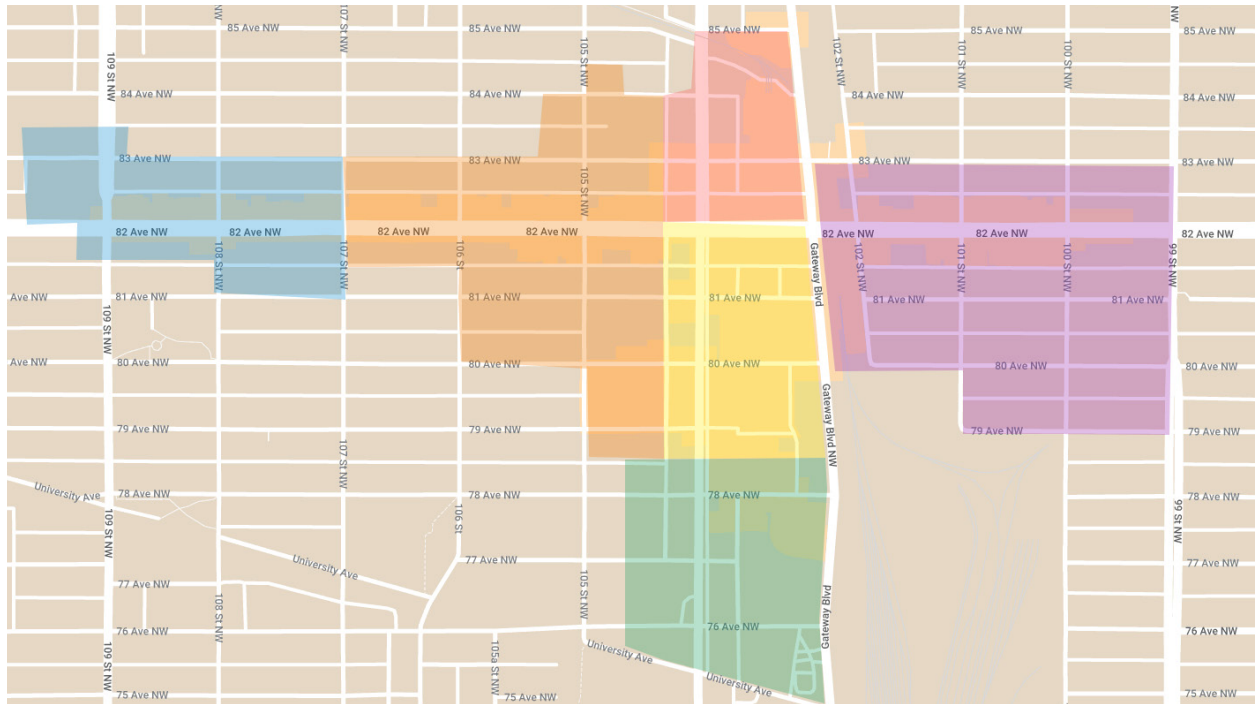
- The majority of respondents live within 5km of the Old Strathcona District
- 83.7% respondents visit the district on a daily or weekly basis
- About a quarter of respondents work within the Old Strathcona District

Themes

- Infrastructure should be placed in a well lit area and within public view
- Strong durable materials should be used
- Bike infrastructure should have 2 areas of support for frames, and should easily fit a U-lock
- Provide adequate spacing between bike racks for families and adaptive bikes
- Include a buffer zone from sidewalks, bike lanes, and car lanes
- Parklets should be stroller and wheelchair friendly
- Accessibility should be top of mind – in both design and location

PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

Survey respondents were asked, based on the following map, where they saw the greatest need for new benches, bike racks, and parklets.



Blue Zone: West Whyte Avenue / Old Strathcona

Orange Zone: Central Whyte Avenue / Old Strathcona

Red Zone: Farmers Market / North Gateway

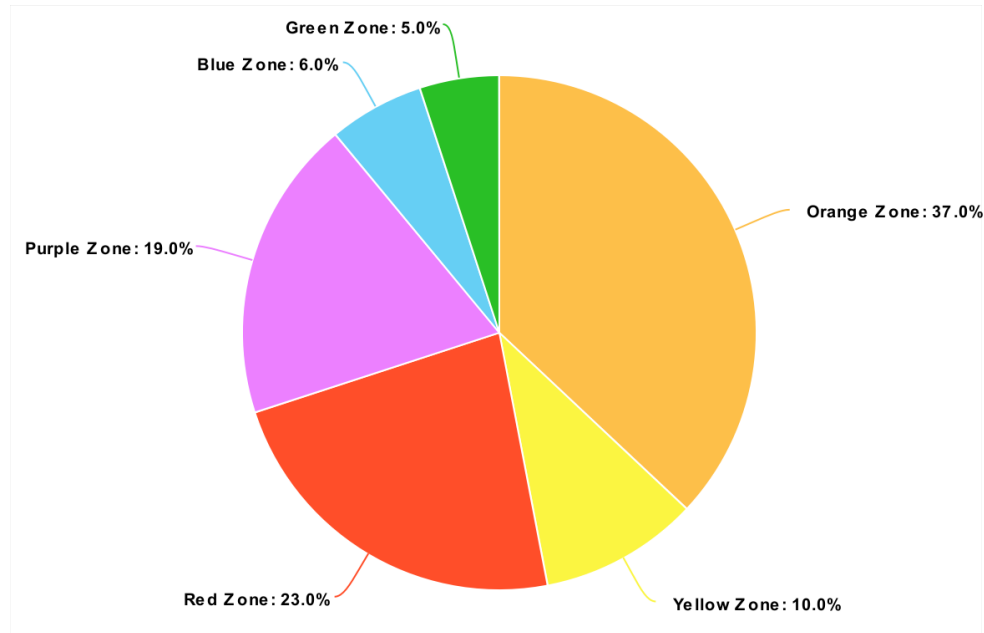
Yellow Zone: Central Gateway

Green Zone: South Old Strathcona

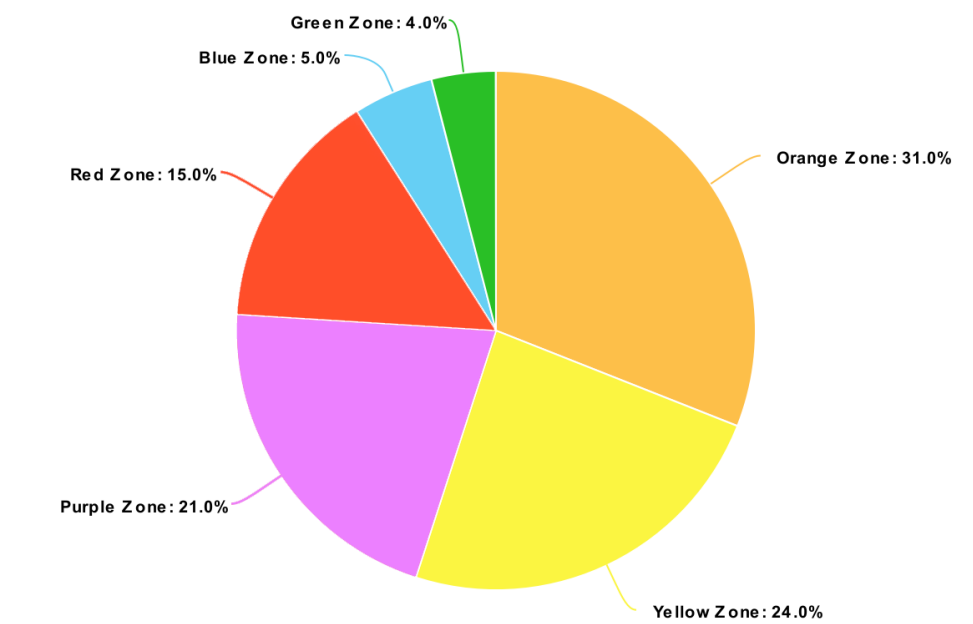
Purple Zone: West Ritchie / East Whyte Avenue

PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

Top Choices for Bench Placement:

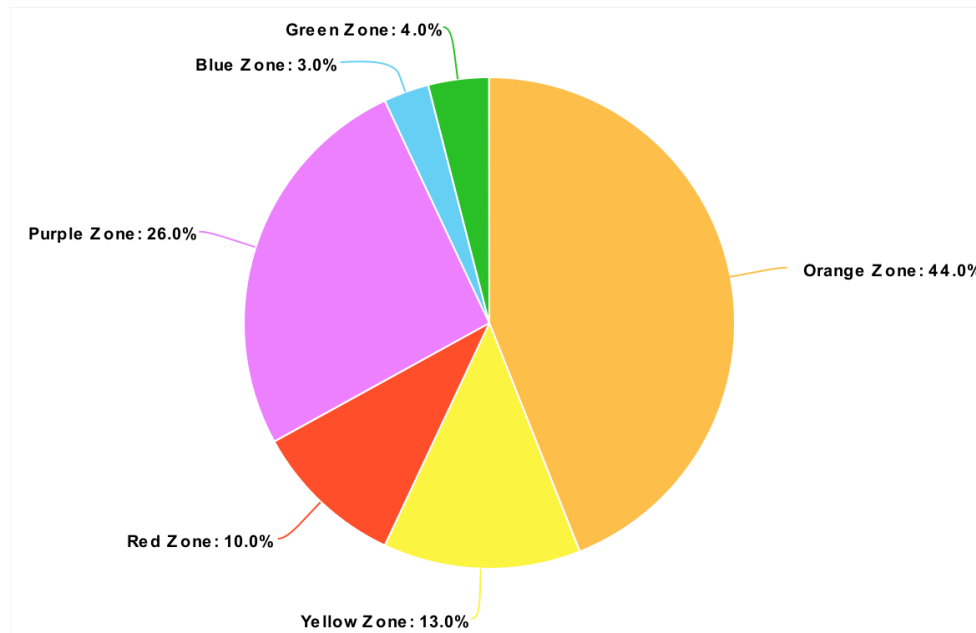


Top Choices for Bike Rack Placement:



PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

Top Choices for Parklet Placement:



Analysis

The Orange Zone (Central Whyte Avenue / Old Strathcona) was the top choice for almost all categories. This area clearly is a priority for new infrastructure of all types

The Blue Zone (West Whyte Avenue) was the lowest priority for respondents. This could be due to existing infrastructure in the area, or a lack of active businesses that require more public seating infrastructure.

The Red Zone (Farmers Market / North Gateway) was a priority for bench and bike racks, but not for parklets. This could be due to the lack of space for parklets in the area, or a need for less intensive infrastructure due to the activity that goes on in the area.

PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

Design Feedback and Other Comments

Suggested design features for bicycle and bench infrastructure, in order of frequency, were as follows:

- Tire pumps
- Adequate parking spaces for cargo bikes
- Directional signage for additional bike parking
- Directional signage for local landmarks
- Bike stand or lift for maintenance
- Bike tools for maintenance

Suggested design features for parklet infrastructure, in order of frequency, were as follows:

- Include plants/greenery into parklet design
- Include bench seating into design, with room for group seating
- Table seating — places to eat and drink
- Include public art elements into parklet design
- Place parklets close to garbage disposal
- Include, where possible, lighting into the parklet design, or choose locations in well lit areas

BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARY

Businesses in the Old Strathcona area were asked where they would like to see new benches, bike racks, and parklets in the district — as well as what design features they would like to see.

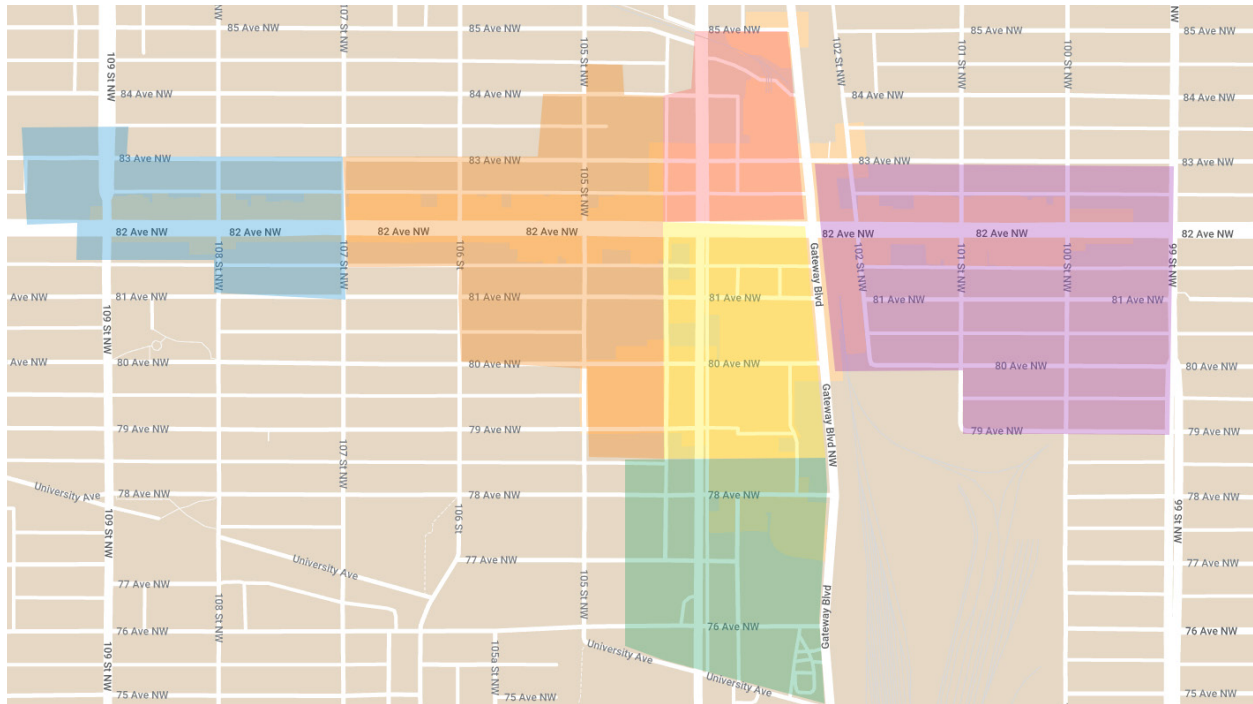
The business survey was distributed through the Old Strathcona Business Association's direct communication channels. Businesses that are currently a member of the OSBA received a link to respond to the survey. The survey was open for a total of 2 weeks, and we received a total of 27 responses. After analysis, the following general themes and comments were determined:

Themes

- Some businesses had concerns about placing benches and parklets outside of restaurants and bars, taking up potential patio space and clogging the street when line-ups form
- Certain businesses without rear loading docks must have their storefronts clear of obstructions, for loading zone use
- Infrastructure should be evenly distributed across the district
- Benches and parklets should be close to garbage cans
- Certain businesses want a unobstructed view of their storefronts
- Certain businesses had concerns around extended loitering of non-customers

BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARY

Survey respondents were asked, based on the following map, where they saw the greatest need for new benches, bike racks, and parklets.



Blue Zone: West Whyte Avenue / Old Strathcona

Orange Zone: Central Whyte Avenue / Old Strathcona

Red Zone: Farmers Market / North Gateway

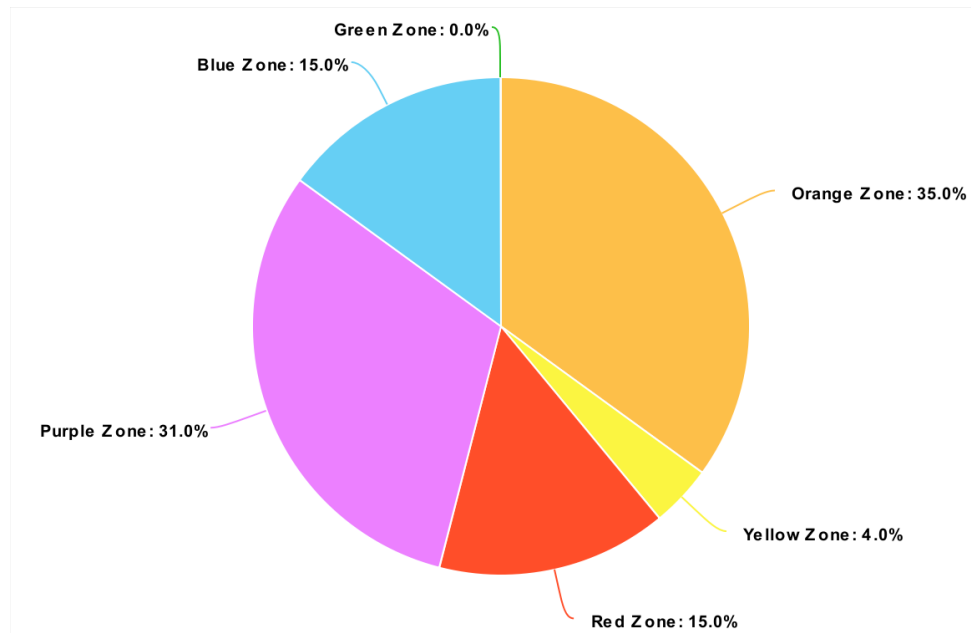
Yellow Zone: Central Gateway

Green Zone: South Old Strathcona

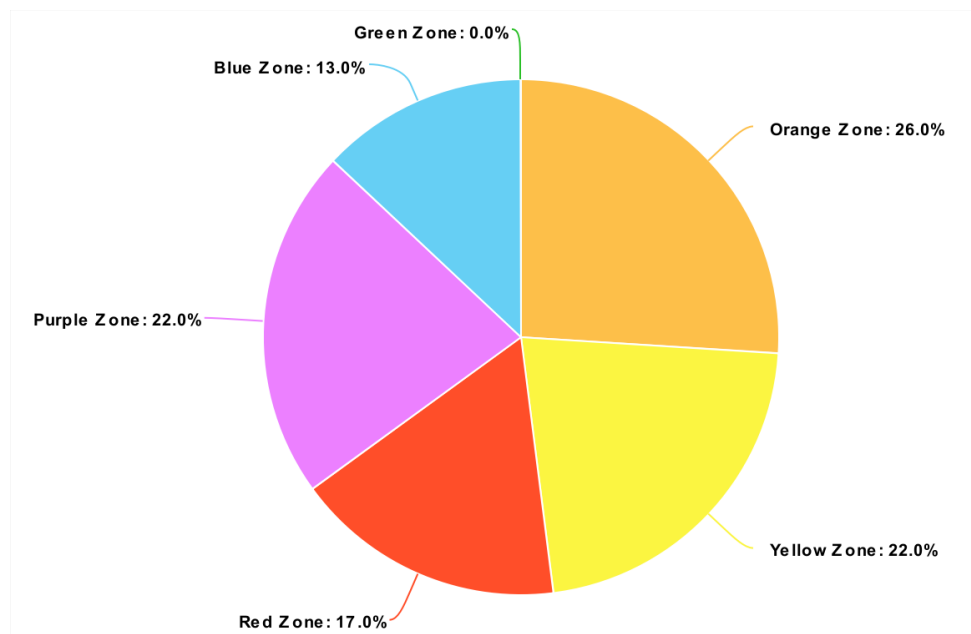
Purple Zone: West Ritchie / East Whyte Avenue

BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARY

Top Choices for Bench Placement:

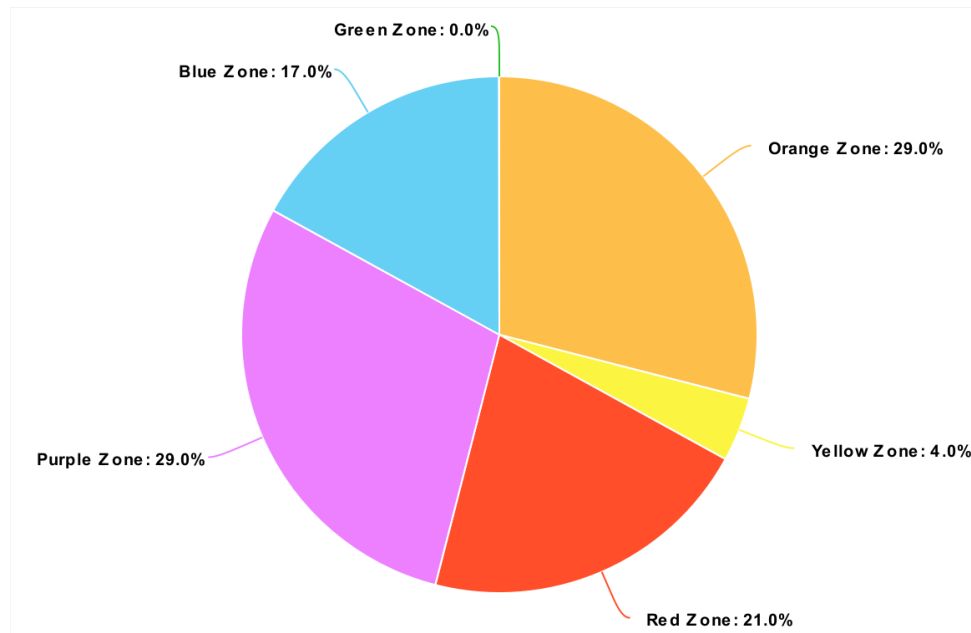


Top Choices for Bike Rack Placement:



BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARY

Top Choices for Parklet Placement:



Analysis

The Orange (Central Whyte Avenue / Old Strathcona) and Purple (West Ritchie / East Whyte Avenue) Zones were the top choice for almost all categories. These areas are clearly a priority for new infrastructure of all types.

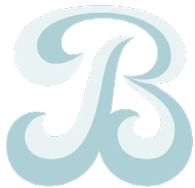
The Green Zone (South Old Strathcona) was chosen by 0 respondents for all categories. This could be due to a lack of businesses responding from that area, or the perception that infrastructure closer to Whyte Avenue is preferable.

Yellow (Central Gateway) and Green (South Old Strathcona) Zones were chosen the least, with the other 4 zones having a relatively even distribution. This could indicate a desire for more infrastructure along Whyte Avenue.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS SUMMARY

Various stakeholders and industry experts were engaged to provide their expertise on location, design, and best-practices. Sessions were held in a virtual meeting format over the course of June and July, 2022.

The following stakeholder groups were engaged:



Bike Edmonton

Bike Edmonton is a registered non-profit society dedicated to making everyday cycling in Edmonton safer and more accessible by providing bicycle services, education, and civic representation.



Paths for People

Paths for People is a local community group that promotes safe, accessible, enjoyable active transportation for all, and advocates for active-transportation infrastructure, policy and leading practices.



The City of Edmonton

Various groups within the City, including Parks & Roads, Infrastructure, Operations & Maintenance, and Business Improvement Area teams were consulted.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS SUMMARY

Based on our stakeholder meetings and conversations, the following themes, comments, and suggestions were gathered:

- Durability is a priority, making sure infrastructure can resist wear and tear
- The bike racks should to accommodate different bicycle styles (i.e.: cargo bikes, electric bikes)
- Bike corals shouldn't be too tightly placed, allow people to dismount easily (elderly, or limited mobility)
- Bike racks should have 2 points of contact for stability while locking
- For security, bike racks should be placed in high visibility areas
- Bike racks should be lockable from both sides (be considerate of the angles that bikes will be placed at)
- Consider the finish of the bike rack vs. road salt
- Orientation is important, avoid having seating facing the street
- Barriers between roadway are preferable as it provides safety and a bit of a sound barrier
- Greenery also provides a nice barrier, and makes more enjoyable aesthetic experience
- Make parklets movable in case of emergency
- Bike rack locations should intersect with routes (both places with current infrastructure, future infrastructure and normal travel paths)
- Parklets need to be flush with sidewalks for accessibility
- Temporary patio guidelines should be used as a basis for parklet design

NEXT STEPS

Information gathered through the conducted engagement activities will be used to inform decisions around location, design features, and technical design elements of infrastructure.

We appreciate the time and effort of everyone who responded and attended stakeholder meetings. The information gathered will help inform the roll-out of this project and is valuable insight into infrastructure requirements desired by the community.

If you have any questions about the project, or wish to provide additional feedback, please reach out to the project team:

Amos Kajner-Nonnekes

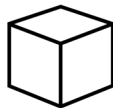
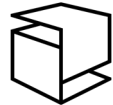
Partner / Director of Design

amos@thirdspacedesigngroup.com

Mickey LaForge

Industrial Designer

mickey@thirdspacedesigngroup.com



THE VIGNETTES™ GROUP OF COMPANIES RESPECTFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE LAND WE WORK AND RESIDE ARE LOCATED ON TREATY 6 TERRITORY A TRADITIONAL GATHERING PLACE FOR DIVERSE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INCLUDING THE CREE, BLACKFOOT, MÉTIS, NAKOTA SIOUX, IROQUOIS, DENE, OJIBWAY/ SAULTEAUX/ ANISHINABE, INUIT, AND MANY OTHERS WHOSE HISTORIES, LANGUAGES, AND CULTURES CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITY.

WE HOPE TO CONTINUE OUR WORK COLLABORATING WITH INDIGENOUS ARTISTS THROUGH OUR VARIOUS ART CALLS, FESTIVALS, EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES AND FUTURE DESIGN PROJECTS.