

YELLOWHEAD TRAIL

FREEWAY CONVERSION PROGRAM

Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program Fort Road Widening - Questions and Answers

This document is posted to capture the questions received during the online information sessions hosted by the City of Edmonton on October 21 and 27, 2020.

Environmental

Q. Will the roadway changes create more traffic noise in my neighbourhood?

- A. A noise impact assessment was completed as part of the Fort Road Widening project which identified that no noise mitigation is required, as sound levels in the area after project completion are expected to remain below the threshold set out in the City of Edmonton's [Urban Traffic Noise Policy](#).

Q. How does this project work for people who aren't in cars?

- A. Along Fort Road there will be an improved sidewalk on the east side and a new shared-use path on the west side. Sidewalks will be provided on one side of the road along 125 Avenue, 71 Street and 61 Street in the project area. There will also be a shared-use path constructed along 125 Avenue from Fort Road to 66 Street and it will connect to the existing path that parallels the LRT tracks. In addition, landscaping in the area will be improved and incorporate street furniture, like benches and waste receptacles, and small green areas for pedestrians and cyclists to use.

Q. How does this project fit in with some of the City's "greener" plans, like the Blatchford project and goals around climate change?

- A. This project is implementing low impact development (LID) principles within landscape elements. LID mimics the natural movement of water by managing stormwater close to its source. More information on LID principles within the City can be found [here](#). In addition, landscaping in the area will be improved with new trees and several small green areas for pedestrians and cyclists to use.

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- Q. CN yard is just 15 metres from residential housing. What will be done to help us?*
- A. CN operations are not within the City of Edmonton's control.
- Q. What is going to be done to control traffic and noise in the Delton area?*
- A. The Delton area is outside the limits of this project. However, the noise wall that runs along Yellowhead Trail from 97 Street to Fort Road is being replaced over the 2021 and 2022 construction seasons to continue buffering communities behind the wall from traffic noise on Yellowhead Trail.
- Q. Can we view the noise assessment studies that you say have been carried out? Who did them? Can we speak to those people?*
- A. A copy of the report can be obtained upon request by contacting yellowheadtrail@edmonton.ca.
- Q. Does this work against Transit Oriented Development the city is trying to push?*
- A. The purpose of the project is to widen Fort Road and build a new collector road—125 Avenue, creating an east/west connection between Fort Road, 66 Street and Yellowhead Trail at 61 Street. The design for this project considers and accommodates all adjacent land uses, including possible Transit Oriented Development.
- Q. Your presentation states Fort Road will be dropped / lowered to accommodate "highload" vehicles such as trucks. What is being done for noise attenuation for the neighborhood north of the tracks?*
- A. A noise impact assessment study for the future traffic and road conditions was completed as part of the Fort Road Widening project. Based on the study results, no noise mitigation is required as sound levels in the area after project completion are expected to remain below the threshold set out in the City of Edmonton's [Urban Traffic Noise Policy](#).

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Q. What noise attenuation will be placed to block noise from the 125 Avenue collector road between Fort road and 71 street?

- A. The type of existing development (non-residential) along 71 Street and the new 125 Avenue does not require noise reduction mitigation measures according to the City's Noise policy. Noise reduction is not warranted for the residential neighbourhood as a result of the roadway improvements.

Financial

Q. What is the effect on land and house values with three years of heavy construction in adjacent blocks?

- A. Construction is generally not considered in the assessment of house values because it is temporary.

Q. Does CN rail support the cost of the bridge improvements?

- A. CN bridge work is needed because of the proposed Fort Road widening and is solely funded by the Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program budget.

Q. Why is the City spending money on a project like this when we're in financially difficult times?

- A. The Yellowhead Trail Freeway Conversion Program is a transformational project for Edmonton, contributing to regional prosperity through job creation during construction and efficient movement of goods in the long term. The City of Edmonton has funding commitments from all three levels of government and continues to be fully committed to seeing this program through to completion.

Q. What type of contract will this project be tendered under and when will the contractor be selected?

- A. The contract for this work will be procured under a competitive tender process. Contractor selection will take place in early 2021.

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Q. What about all the cars that come off of Wayne Gretzky Drive? Where will they detour to at the Yellowhead?

A. There will be no road closures at Yellowhead Trail that would affect this traffic or would require any detours.

Q. How much is the roadway expansion expected to cost and maintain? What is the expected lifecycle of this project and would future expansions be required as traffic increases due to induced demand?

A. The project is designed to meet future traffic projections in the area and therefore, no expansions are envisioned within the service life of the roadway. Project cost will be verified once the contractor is appointed.

Project Design

Q. I have a commercial property in the service road off Yellowhead between 82 St. and Fort Road. I am concerned about additional traffic on this road. Can you provide some insight into the analysis on the projects impact on this area?

A. Traffic volumes on 125 Avenue between 82 Street and Fort Road are not expected to increase.

Q. Will access to my neighborhood/business change?

A. Businesses in the Yellowhead Trail Corridor East area, west of Fort Road and north of Yellowhead Trail, will no longer have access to Fort Road immediately south of the gas station or access to the Yellowhead Trail westbound on ramp. Access in and out of the area will be at the new 125 Avenue and Fort Road intersection.

In the Industrial Heights area, business access from Yellowhead Trail will be at 61 Street for westbound traffic only. Access to and from Yellowhead Trail at 62 Street will be removed. Access will be improved through the Industrial Heights area with the addition of 125 Avenue, which will connect 61 Street to Fort Road. As part of the project, the existing intersection at 61 Street and 125 Avenue will be converted to a right-in / right-out access.



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The Balwin neighbourhood access from 126A Avenue at Fort Road will be closed.

Q. What are you doing in regards to pedestrian safety on Fort Road?

A. The sidewalk on the east side will be widened and where possible landscaped boulevard between the road and the path will be provided. At the CN underpass, sidewalk and shared-use path will be elevated to provide falter grade as well as separation from vehicles. In addition, lighting will be provided under the bridge to enhance pedestrian safety.

Q. Are you improving connections and access for pedestrians and cyclists?

A. Pedestrian and cyclist connections will be improved through the project area by adding new shared-use paths and sidewalks which connect with the existing and future network links. Existing sidewalks will also be widened along Fort Road.

Q. Isn't this project unnecessary now that an overpass is going in at 66 Street?

A. The new 66 Street overpass, Fort Road, 125 Avenue and nearby roads will create an interconnected roadway network system. The planned partial interchange (overpass) at 66 Street and Yellowhead Trail will not provide all-direction vehicle access to Yellowhead Trail and road users will be using Fort Road, 125 Avenue or 61 Street for desired destinations.

Q. 66 St north of 125 Ave is being expanded. Does this mean that there is an expectation for added volumes of traffic?

A. The section of 66 Street between 125 Avenue and the CN line will still have four lanes of traffic as it does today. The changes are focused on minimizing the amount of rework needed as part of the upcoming 66 Street overpass project.



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Q. What is the status of the 66 Street interchange? The program map shows it to be a future project.

- A. Concept planning for 66 Street partial interchange (overpass) was completed in February 2020. The design of the 66 Street interchange is expected to begin in 2021. Construction is tentatively scheduled to take place in 2024 and 2025.

Q. If Fort Road will be closed during stage 2, is it possible to improve the west sidewalk of 66 St. all the way to Fort Road to improve walking and cycling connections to the shared-use path along the LRT?

- A. A new shared-use path will be constructed on the west side of 66 Street between CN bridge and future 125 Ave. The existing sidewalk connection between Fort Road and the CN bridge will remain unchanged.

Q. Has the traffic impact on the Yellowhead service road between Fort Road and 82 street been assessed?

- A. Traffic impacts to this road have been assessed and traffic volumes are not expected to change.

Q. Currently, water pools in the Fort Road area by CN rail bridge during heavy rainfalls. How are we going to ensure that flooding does not occur when we lower Fort Road so significantly?

- A. Underground stormwater storage and a storm pond will be constructed as part of the project to hold stormwater drainage during heavy rainfalls.

Q. Why is a dry pond required? There have never been any flooding problems in this area, including overland flooding? What about this project creates that need?

- A. Fort Road will be widened to the west and lowered approximately two metres at the CN underpass as part of this project. More water is expected to flow to this low-lying area. A dry pond is part of the system that will help minimize the amount of water that could pond under the bridge during significant rain events.

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Q. Have you consulted any outside group concerning pedestrian access? (ie Paths for People).

A. Paths for People and Bike Edmonton groups were contacted during this fall engagement phase to join the online learning sessions and provide feedback.

Q. I'm wondering how this expansion will negatively impact the City's efforts to create a Transit Oriented, pedestrian-friendly node at Belvedere station. It's already very unpleasant for pedestrians and cyclists, given the width and speed of the road. Turning it into a larger road/highway seems to contradict the development goals of this area

A. As part of the project, new shared-use paths and sidewalks will be added to the area to improve pedestrian and cyclist connectivity. All new planned connections will tie-in to the existing links or will be ready for tie-in when future links in the vicinity are constructed. Existing sidewalks will be reconstructed wider and additional lighting and barriers will be constructed through the CN underpass.

Project Construction

Q. With the already tight parking spaces for residential in the area, what will be done to address the added pressure from additional equipment and construction employees parking.

A. All Contractors' private vehicles will be parked in active work areas that are closed to traffic. During construction, on-street parking bans will be required in front of homes and businesses in order to facilitate safe completion of the work.

Q. Who will monitor the excessive traffic and noise in the area during construction and can I expect the noise and congestion to carry on for 2 shifts? (all day and all night)

A. The contractor will be expected to comply with the City's noise bylaw and apply for a noise bylaw exemption permit for any overnight work, if planned. More information about planned construction staging will be shared in spring 2021 at the pre-construction information session and in future construction bulletins issued by the Contractor.



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Q. How the widening will affect access to the properties between the 66 St and 125 Ave?

A. Permanent access will remain for all operating businesses.

Q. Will there be any detours or road closures? If so, how long will they be?

A. A temporary closure of Fort Road is required to complete the construction of temporary train detour tracks. It is anticipated that Fort Road will be closed from 125 Avenue to 66 Street for a period of approximately two to three months; a second such closure will also be required to remove the detour tracks. During the widening of the CN underpass Fort Road will be reduced to a single lane in each direction. During this time traffic will also be able to use the new 125 Avenue constructed between Fort Road and 66 Street.

Q. What is the construction schedule? And when will the work start?

A. Construction is scheduled to start in spring 2021 and be completed by the end of 2023.

Q. Since Fort Road will be restricted for the construction period, what is the anticipated impact at the 66 St and Fort Road intersection?

A. Due to the planned work in the area, traffic patterns at the intersection of Fort Road and 66 Street will change and some movements may be impacted. Changes to the signal timing would be implemented to help traffic move effectively through this intersection during construction.

Q. Since traffic patterns are going to be altered during construction, what kind of directional signing is proposed to advise drivers of alternative routes?

A. The contractor will provide signage notifying of traffic pattern changes during construction. Signage could be in the form of variable message boards and roadside signs.

Q. Does the public know that there will be two temporary overpasses and two temporary rail tracks during the period of construction?

A. The existing two CN tracks will be detoured during bridge widening construction. The north track will be detoured north of the existing bridge and the south track will be

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detoured south of the existing bridge. Communication is important to the project team and we will continue to share information about plans and construction as widely as possible. Before construction begins, we will hold a construction information session.

Q. When does this project end and the 66 Street Overpass begin?

A. The Fort Road widening project construction is scheduled for completion in 2023. The 66 Street Overpass construction is tentatively scheduled for 2024–2025.

Q. When will 126A Avenue at Fort Road be closed to traffic?

A. 126A Avenue is expected to be closed in fall 2021.

Q. How is the staging of the temporary overpasses and temporary tracks going to take place? Will all staging be done from the south side of the tracks and not through the residential neighborhood?

A. Staging will take place on both the north and south side of the CN tracks. Access is required on both sides to secure full access to the workzone.

Q. Who will be the CN contact for temporary track work?

A. At this point CN has not advised who will be the contact for temporary track work.

Q. Further to the staging question now being discussed, how will the impact to the residents north of the tracks be mitigated?

A. The contractor will be required to comply with City bylaws and maintain access to the neighbourhood. Specific concerns can be brought up with the project team by contacting yellowheadtrail@edmonton.ca

Miscellaneous

Q. Will the slides from tonight be available online?

A. The slides and presentation will be uploaded online.

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Q. Will the City share their traffic assessment work?

A. Results of the traffic analysis can be shared upon request by contacting yellowheadtrail@edmonton.ca.

Q. Who will own the land around the 125 Avenue collector from Fort Road to 71 Street? Will spaces around this collector location be allotted as green space or sold? What will it be zoned as if sold?

A. Along 71 Street existing businesses will remain. All open spaces outside the roadway will be developed into stormwater facilities and green space.

Q. Will having a super highway interfere with future residential development?

A. Fort Road is an arterial roadway currently serving developed industrial areas between Yellowhead Trail and 66 Street and will not affect current or future residential development in close proximity. Fort Road directly north and south of this project is already a six-lane roadway, this project creates six continuous lanes along Fort Road.

Q. Are there any plans for the remainder of expropriated property that is not used in construction?

A. Future use of the remnant portions of the acquired properties will be reviewed once the project is completed.

Q. Why were we not engaged earlier in the design process?

A. When the concept plan was completed in 2015, it was anticipated that public engagement would be conducted at a later date when funding and timelines were secured for the project.