

# What We Heard

## 142 Street Pedestrian / Cyclist Bridge Public Engagement #1

January 2021

| **SHARE** YOUR VOICE  
**SHAPE** OUR CITY

**Edmonton**

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## 142 Street Pedestrian/ Cyclist Bridge

### Public Engagement #1

#### Project Background

The Terwillegar Drive expansion plan identifies a new pedestrian/cyclist connection over Whitemud Drive, between the Whitemud Drive/Terwillegar Drive interchange and Whitemud Creek. The bridge crossing is funded by the City and in partnership with the Government of Alberta. The project also includes active mode connections and open space upgrades. Although the previously assumed location for the bridge is at 142 Street, this location will be reviewed and validated as part of this project

The City has initiated the planning and design of the bridge, including a comprehensive engagement program which will be used for the development of the Concept and Preliminary Design.

#### Community Committee

To assist in creating an effective engagement process, the City of Edmonton recruited volunteer members to a Community Committee for this project. Members include residents of the local neighbourhoods and representatives of community organizations and area schools. This Committee is responsible for helping adapt and adjust the public engagement process in order to reach a broad and diverse range of people who are interested in the project. The Community Committee does not provide input on the design of the bridge or surrounding amenities outside of the opportunities available to the wider public.

## What We Did

The first round of public engagement was held between November 23, 2020 and December 13, 2020. During this phase, Edmontonians were engaged on what their priorities and values are for this project to directly inform the creation of a draft vision and guiding principles. The engagement also sought to gain a local understanding of the project context by asking residents about issues and opportunities they perceive in the study area.

### Communication

To promote the project and the engagement opportunities to a broad and diverse group of Edmontonians, the following communication methods were used:

#### Direct Letters

- + Letters were delivered to adjacent property owners, notifying them of the project and the opportunity to join the community committee.

#### Postcards

- + 2,548 postcards were sent to all addresses in Bulyea Heights and Brookside

#### Road Signs

- + 10 temporary signs were installed throughout the greater Terwillegar-Riverbend area

#### Online and Print Advertisements

- + Social media posts
- + Riverbend Ragg Times advertisement

### Public Engagement Activities

Recognizing that COVID-19 represents an unpredictable and unique scenario, the City has made the decision to cancel all in-person Public Engagement Events until further notice. Instead, we will be using digital engagement approaches as we strategically relaunch prioritized City projects. The project web page and Engaged Edmonton page were used to introduce participants to the project and invite participation in the engagement activities summarized in the following:

#### Engaged Edmonton Ideas Tool

- + An online public forum where participants could post their ideas for the project, and read, "like", and comment on other participant's ideas
- + Provided an opportunity to share ideas for the project, and respond to other participant's perspectives.

- + 186 total contributions

#### Engaged Edmonton Places Tool

- + An online public map where participants could place pins with area specific opportunities and issues. It provided an opportunity to share local knowledge on the project area.

- + 35 total contributions

#### Online Survey

- + An online survey available on the Engaged Edmonton portal. The survey asked participants about their priorities, values and concerns for the project.

- + 151 total participants

## What We Heard

This section is a summary of what we heard with the Engaged Edmonton activities and survey. The summary has been developed to reflect the relevancy, frequency, and diversity of responses we received based on the questions and prompts we provided to participants.

 *I'm looking forward to a shorter and much safer commute by bike into downtown Edmonton (as opposed to having to cross Terwillegar drive twice). Also looking forward to a much safer bike/walking route to get to river valley trails with children.* 

– Survey Response

## Online Survey Results

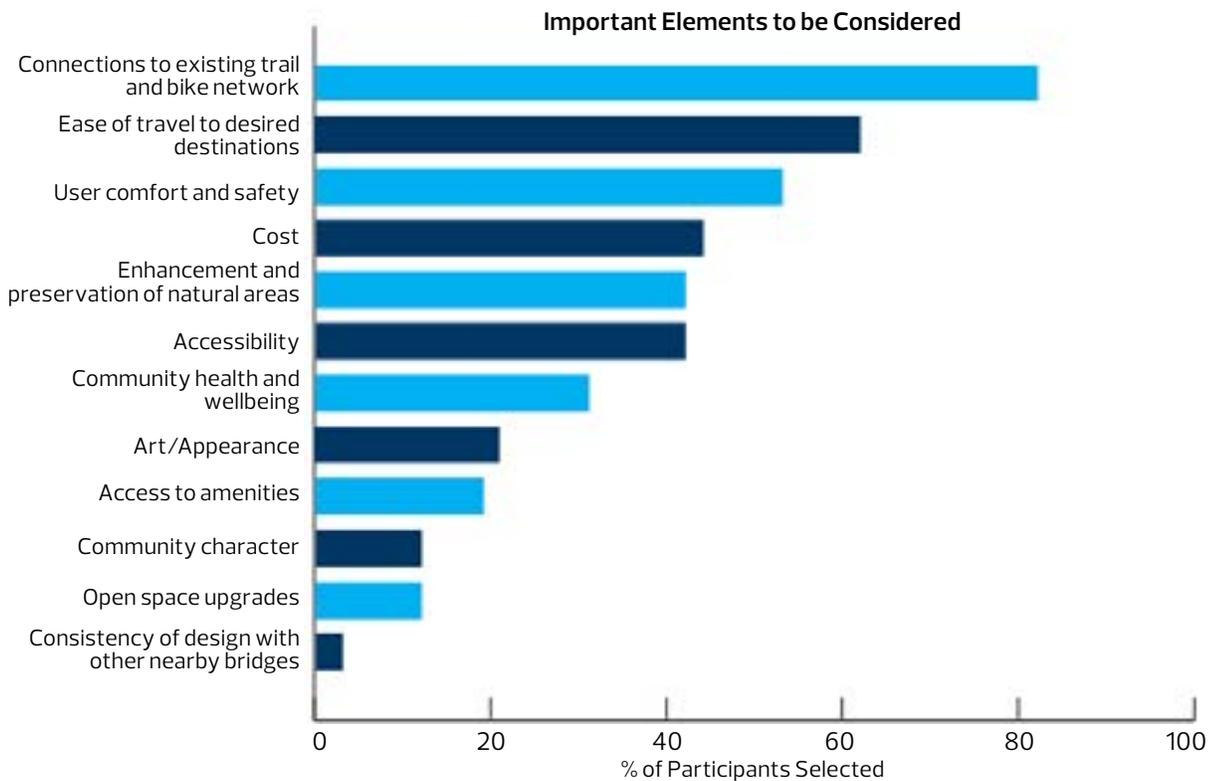
### Participation in Terwillegar Drive Expansion Plan Public Engagement Activities

Participants were asked if they had participated in any of the public engagement activities for the Terwillegar Drive expansion plan. Forty two percent of participants stated they had previously participated in Terwillegar Drive Expansion Plan Public Engagement activities including Community League, commercial property owner or Terwillegar–Riverbend Advisory Council meetings, public engagement/information events, and/or public surveys.

### Important Elements to be Considered

Participants were asked what elements were the most important to be considered for the project. The five most common elements selected were 1) connections to existing trail and bike network (82%), 2) ease of travel to desired destinations (62%), 3) user comfort and safety (53%), 4) cost (44%), and 5) accessibility (42%) and enhancement and preservation of natural areas (42%)\*.

*\*Participants were able to select up to 5 options. Therefore, the total sum of percentages for each element exceeds 100%*



### What About the Project are People Looking Forward to?

Participants were asked what about the project were they most looking forward to enjoying or experiencing. The most common responses were:

- + Increased ability to access trails and natural amenities within the Whitemud Ravine and Edmonton's larger river valley network
- + Easier commute to the University / Downtown on bike from south of the Whitemud
- + Access to amenities like shops and restaurants in other neighbourhoods, such as South Gate, Snow Valley, schools and Terwillegar Recreation Centre through walking, biking or wheeling
- + Safer and more efficient connection over Whitemud Drive that does not require confusing detours or sharp changes in elevation
- + A bridge that is designed for users of all ages and abilities

Other responses mentioned:

- + The social and recreational benefits of this bridge, including going on walks and bike rides with friends and family
- + The opportunity to make biking and walking more attractive transportation options than driving to certain locations and create a safe environment for users in the winter at night



*I live in Bulyea and this neighbourhood feels somewhat isolated from bike trails. I'm looking forward to being able to more easily commute by bike without needing to ride on busy roads.*

- Survey Response

### **What About the Project are People Concerned with?**

Participants were asked what about the project were they were concerned with. The most common concerns mentioned were:

- + Connecting the bridge directly to Edmonton's larger active transportation network
- + Designing a bridge that can adequately accommodate the needs of users of all abilities and ages, and in all seasons
- + Designing a bridge that is wide enough to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians comfortably
- + The five-year timeline for this project is too long
- + Project delays or significant cost increases

Other responses mentioned:

- + Unwanted traffic and activity to their neighbourhood, including unsafe cyclist behaviour
- + Concern about the cost of the bridge relative to the benefits, particularly given the challenging economic condition in the City
- + Preference that the City prioritize other initiatives and projects
- + Construction impacts on their neighbourhood and traffic operations on Whitemud Drive
- + Ensuring the bridge is aesthetically pleasing
- + Environmental impacts of the project

## Future Use of the Bridge

Most respondents anticipate using the 142 Street Bridge both for recreation/exercise and for accessing local destinations in the local communities and within Southwest Edmonton. Nearly half of respondents anticipate using the bridge for accessing destinations city-wide. Seventeen percent of respondents did not anticipate using the bridge. Less than 10% selected "for gathering and celebrating", which indicates that most respondents believe that the priority purpose of this bridge should be a connection, rather than a destination. Other uses provided included using the bridge as a viewpoint and as a convenient connection for children.

## Other Considerations

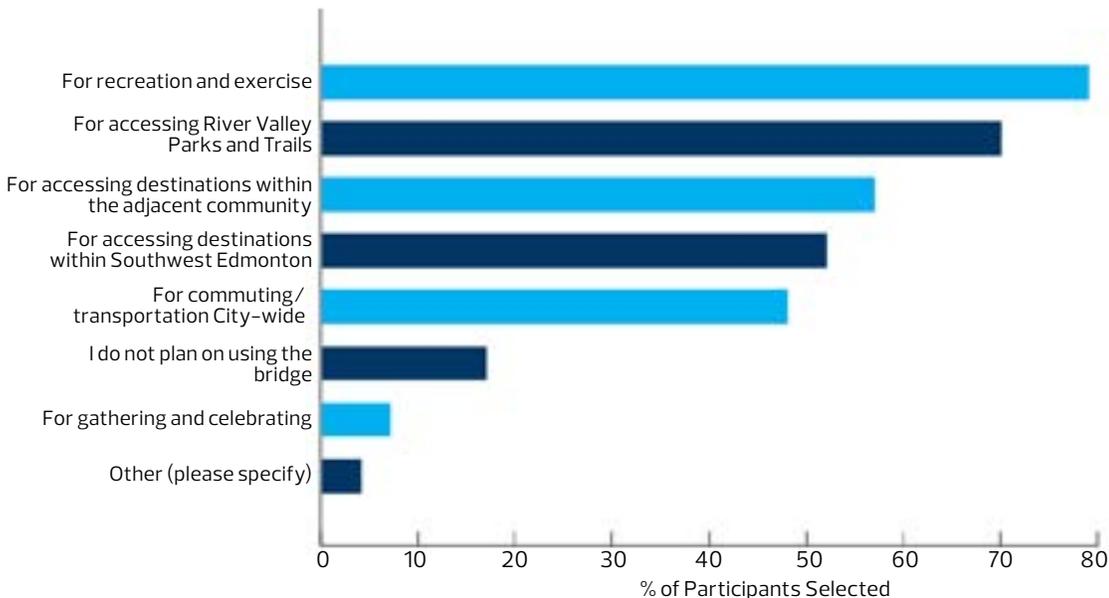
Other commonly mentioned considerations included:

- + Overall general support and excitement for the project
- + Desire for the project to effectively integrate into Edmonton's existing active transportation network and enhance connections where possible
- + Desire for construction to begin sooner than what is scheduled
- + Concern with the cost and priority of the project
- + Concern with potential negative interactions between bridge users and vehicles on the Whitemud and desire for the design of the bridge to mitigate this
- + Desire for bridge to balance cost and aesthetics with a simple and elegant design

Other comments included:

- + Concern with how construction will impact the surrounding natural areas
- + Concern that the bridge will increase the number of pedestrians and cyclists in their neighbourhoods

Future Use of the Bridge\*

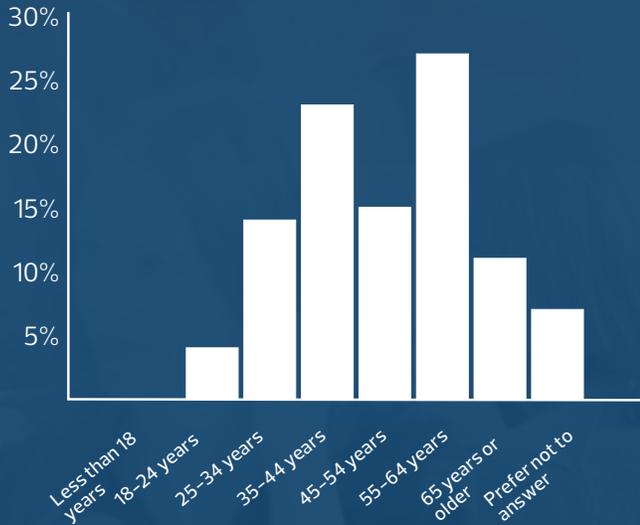


\*Participants could select more than one option and therefore total percentage is greater than 100.

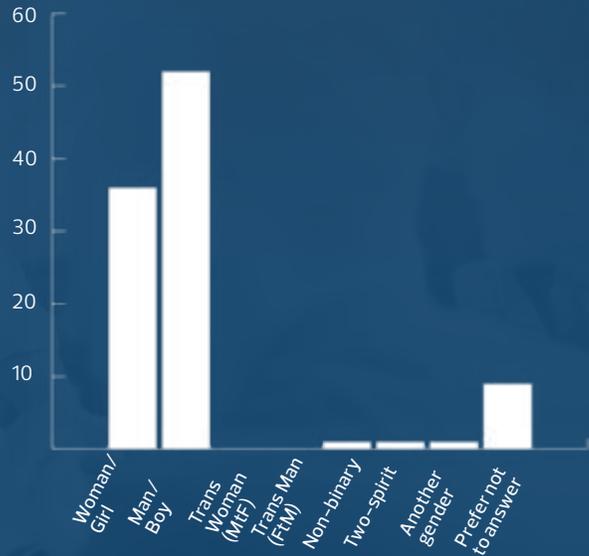
## Who Responded to the Online Survey

The following results were obtained from the demographic questions in the online survey:

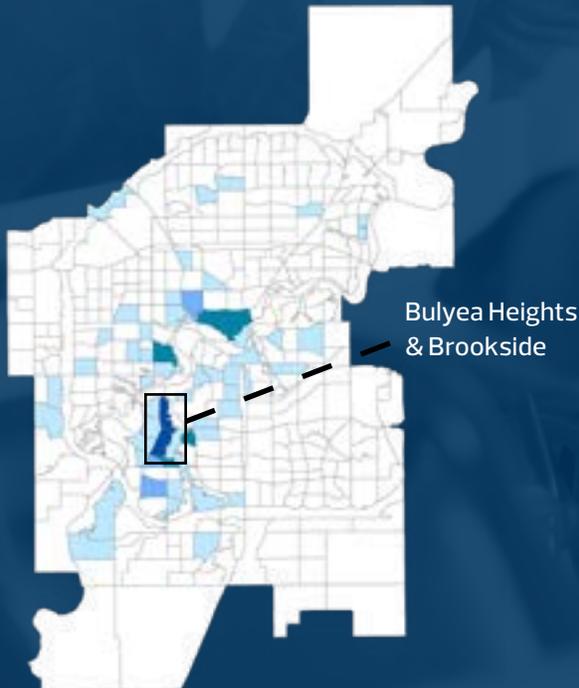
### Age of Participants



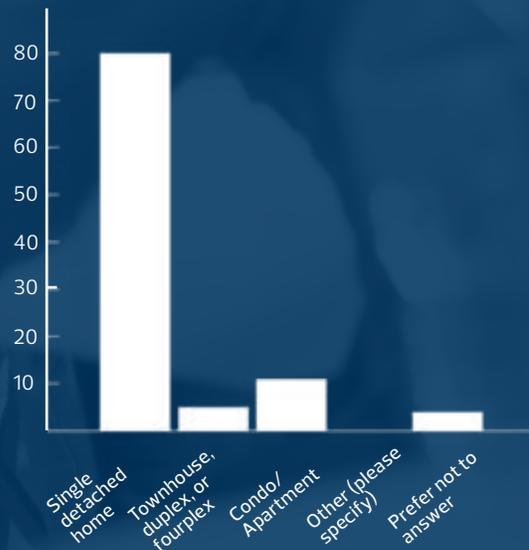
### Gender of Participants



### Neighbourhoods of Participants



### Dwelling Types of Participants



## Engaged Edmonton Ideas Tool

The Ideas Tool invited participants to share their ideas and what is important to them, and tell us their vision for the project. Here, participants could read what others had suggested, and show support for other ideas through "liking" posts. Participants could also engage in open and fair discussions through commenting on posts. There was a total of 232 visits to this tool, 31 different ideas posted to the page and 186 total contributions (including likes and comments). The two most popular ideas, in terms of likes, were:

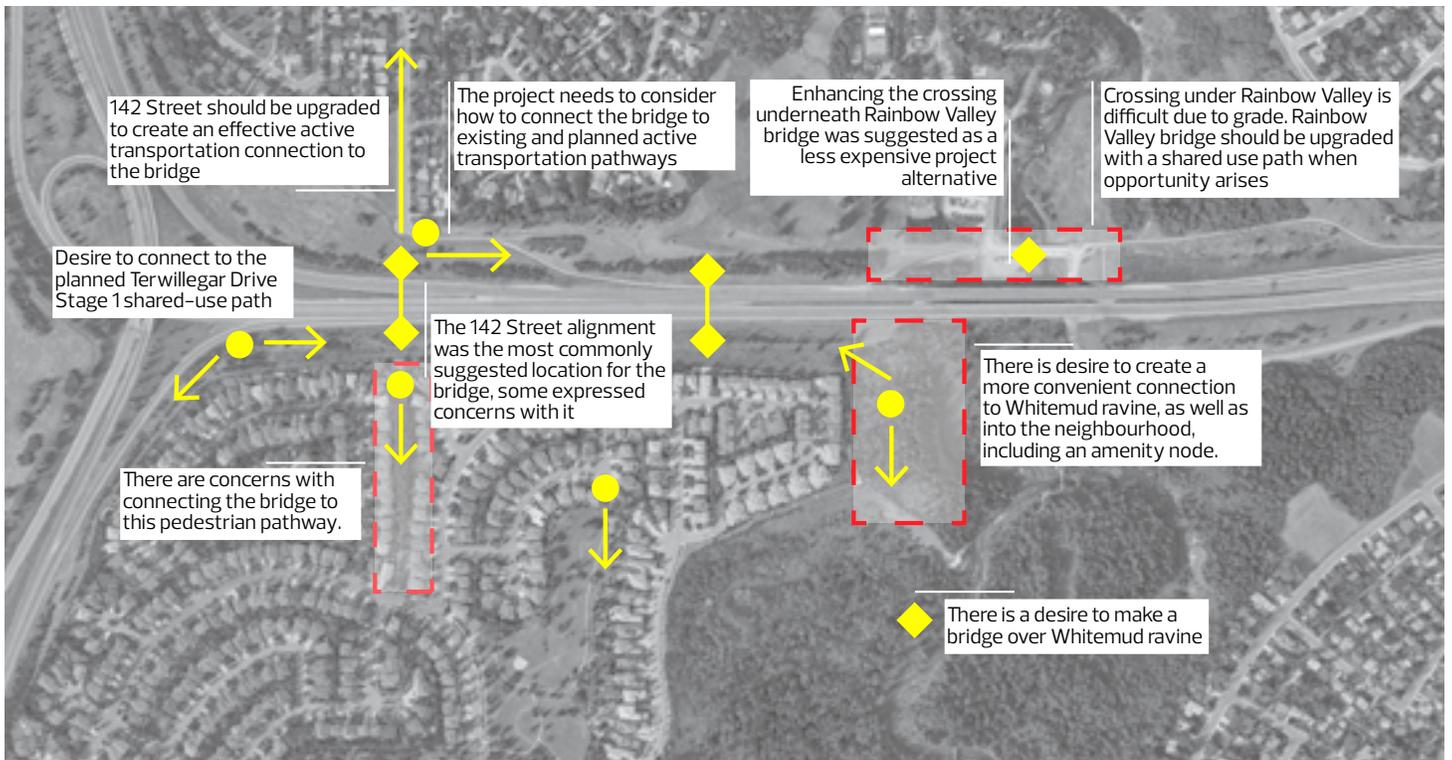
- + "Make it accessible for everyone either using a bike, walking, scooter or wheelchair. Primary path grade of 2%, good wayfinding and well lit" (8 likes)
- + "Complete pedestrian bridge sooner!" (7 likes)

The other ideas posted to the Ideas Tool can be summarized with the following points:

- + Provide for a cyclist connection that does not require riders to dismount
- + A number of respondents indicated a preference to use the previously planned 142 Street – Butterworth Way alignment and provide a route to Whitemud Creek
- + Design to be accessible for all ages, abilities, and seasons
- + The project is too financially expensive, and should not be a priority
- + Support for the bridge as a much needed link for active travel in Edmonton
- + This project will make it much easier for residents to access destinations in Edmonton using active modes
- + The bridge should have aesthetic appeal and promote views to the surrounding natural areas
- + Explore alternative crossing locations, such as further to the east

## Engaged Edmonton Places Tool

The Places Tool invited participants to share their input on the study area and where they saw opportunities or issues for the project by dropping pins with comments on them. There was a total of 35 contributions to the Place Tool made by 21 different contributors.



Other feedback captured by the Places Tool:

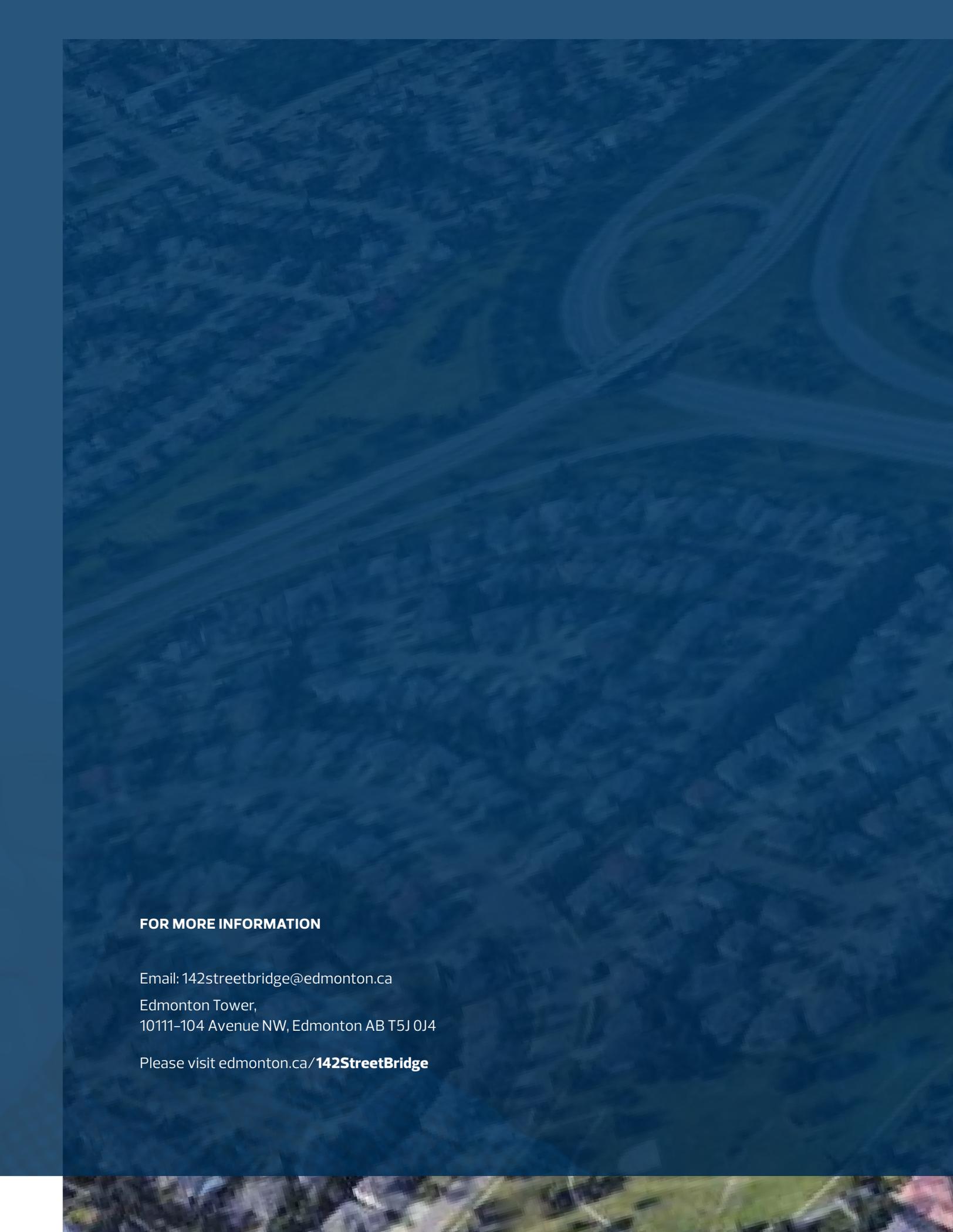
- + The location of the bridge should minimize the required elevation change to make crossing as accessible as possible
- + One comment suggested the crossing at 53 Avenue is sufficient to serve this area

## Lessons Learned

Based on feedback received, the project team is exploring how the next phase of engagement can include opportunities for residents to provide feedback if someone is unable to participate online (i.e. does not have access to Internet at home). More information will be provided in the next phase. The next phase of engagement will include information about how to obtain hard copy surveys on the post card to support an inclusive and convenient way for all residents to participate.

## Next Steps

The first phase of engagement will be used to inform the development of a vision, guiding principles, and priority considerations to inform the project process. The feedback gathered will also be used, along with technical analysis and City policies to develop concept ideas for the bridge and surrounding amenities. The next phase of public engagement is planned for February 2021.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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