



Paths  
for  
People



Urban  
Development  
Institute  
Edmonton Metro



December 1, 2023

Urban Planning Committee  
City of Edmonton  
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4R7

Re: December 5, 2023, Urban Planning Committee, Item 7.2 – Closed and Shared Streets in Downtown

Dear Urban Planning Committee and Members of Edmonton City Council,

Collectively, our organizations represent thousands of residents, advocates, community leaders, business owners, developers, and city builders in Edmonton. We appreciate the opportunity to provide ongoing expertise and perspectives on municipal actions regarding downtown pedestrianization and remain committed to collaboratively implementing The City Plan. This letter details our perspectives on UPE01333 (“Closed and Shared Streets in Downtown”).

We thank Administration for the opportunity to provide our insights in developing this report. During their engagement, Administration indicated that their approach to Council’s motion would focus primarily on temporary street closures. This limited scope does not align with community and stakeholder expectations of a more holistic discussion around what is needed to fully prioritize the pedestrian experience across the city’s core – which emerged during the 102 Avenue street closure debate.

Working collaboratively, Paths for People, UDI – Edmonton Metro, Downtown Recovery Coalition, Edmonton Downtown Business Association, and Downtown Edmonton Community League, staged and hosted several discussions and engagements, conducted research, and developed actions towards the goal of downtown pedestrianization and supporting transformative projects in the city’s core. We sought to explore how the public, private, and community sectors could work together to create safe, accessible spaces that serve everyone in our core – and developed nine actions that express our organization’s level of support and endorsement.

We urge Council and Administration to work with our organizations to consider and work collaboratively to implement these nine actions in a variety of ways:

1. Implement shared and open streets downtown by targeting immediate improvements to places like Rice Howard Way and 104 Street.
2. Expand sidewalks for increased accessibility, in addition to supporting patios, benches and trees.
3. Encourage developers to integrate public and private space to increase connectivity.
4. Enforce and support heightened standards for construction detours through



- better communication and signage, more consistent waste cleaning, and enhanced snow and ice clearing through public-private partnerships.
5. Elevate streetscape expectations by prioritizing vibrancy and infrastructure initiatives in main corridors.
  6. Enhance LRT entrances with wider stairwells, clearer sightlines, and more amenities.
  7. Upgrade cycling infrastructure to reduce car/bike and pedestrian/bike conflict.
  8. Utilize heightened design and operational standards upon implementation of shared streets for the safety of pedestrians.
  9. Continue to shift perspectives on parking and driving while recognizing that driving and parking will continue to be an available transportation mode to reach downtown even if street access, as we know it now, changes.

We are encouraged that Administration is in alignment with several of our actions (e.g., shared street locations) and outlines existing initiatives and ongoing work. Furthermore, Administration’s report does not indicate a prioritization of actions, assignment of key responsibilities within City administration, clear timelines for implementation, or how success will be measured and evaluated.

**We ask that Council request a strategy for cross-department integration to address the outstanding gaps and opportunities outlined in this report and in our Downtown Pedestrianization Plan. The outcome of this strategy should inform and be integrated into the planning and development of the new downtown area revitalization policy that will replace the now-outdated Capital City Downtown Plan.**

Downtown is the heartbeat of our city. City Council and Administration can show great leadership in improving our downtown by proactively contemplating where, when, why, and how pedestrianization in the downtown can occur. We must prioritize investment and leverage the support of many different parts of the community in order to achieve a more vibrant, prosperous, and friendly downtown that is better to actively move through.

As our report indicates, we are eager to continue to work with Council and Administration in implementing improvements to our downtown – and each of our organizations have made clear our commitment to the respective actions. Creating a downtown that is safe and accessible for all types of transportation users is a shared goal – and we are committed to realizing this through strategic coordination of resources and integration of public and private sectors.

**Stephen Raitz**  
Board Member,  
Paths for People

**Jason Syvixay**  
Director, Metro  
Strategy  
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**Alexandra Hryciw**  
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