

# Empress Street and Overpass Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study

## Public Engagement Report

May 2017

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Public Engagement for the Empress Street and Overpass Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study occurred at the ‘Inform-Consult’ levels of the IAP2 Spectrum. The public engagement strategy included three main components to engage stakeholders and the general public.

- The first was project promotion by way of a webpage launch on January 6, 2017 on the City of Winnipeg (the City) website to generate project awareness, provide background information, and define the study area and scope of work to the public.
- This was followed by 16 stakeholder meetings that took place from December 2016 through February 2017 where preferences, needs, priorities, concerns, and potential issues were identified. It also provided the project team with an opportunity to gain feedback on schematic options from the key community representatives and adjacent property owners and advocacy groups. The information gathered at each of the stakeholder meetings was considered in the consultant’s preparation of the preliminary design.
- The final component was a public open house held in CF Polo Park Shopping Centre on April 5, 2017 which targeted attendees from the stakeholder meetings, a number of external stakeholder groups and the general public. The event was geared to generate overall project awareness to inform the general public about the project using a series of story boards and displaying the preliminary design. Over 225 people viewed the presentation boards and 29 people filled out comment forms. An online survey was available on the City project webpage for four weeks with 94 people participating in an online survey to provide feedback on the project.

Through all aspects of the public engagement activities, comments were informative and responses were generally positive. Comments were summarized and categorized into specific topics to assist the design team in the preparation and refinements of the preliminary design. Comments that referenced issues outside the project scope were forwarded to the City of Winnipeg to provide information for other initiatives or future projects beyond the scope of this study. Over 90% of the in-person and online participants understood the purpose of the study and 88% of the in-person participants felt that they had an opportunity to talk and ask questions to the project team at the event. The majority of the participants provided recommendations and comments for improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists with a focus on best practices, overall connectivity and universal design. Overall there was general support for this project with an understanding for its need.

**Empress Street and Overpass Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Project Timeline**



## **2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLANNING**

### **2.1. Public Engagement and Communication Plan**

The Empress Street and Overpass Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study public engagement plan was developed to define the engagement process, including planning and communication tools, events, and objectives. The strategy was reviewed by the project steering committee, the project manager and the Office of Public Engagement, and fulfilled the project goals by successfully communicating with stakeholders and the general public by providing clear messaging about the study.

The public engagement plan included the following four Key Tasks / Engagement Events:

- Create a stakeholder profile list;
- Develop communication protocol and tools;
- Conduct internal stakeholder meetings with the City departments/staff and external stakeholders; and,
- Host a public open house event and an online survey.

### **2.2. Stakeholder Profile**

The stakeholder profile was created to identify relevant internal and external stakeholder groups. Stakeholders were categorized in tiers based on the following attributes:

- Geography and proximity to the study area;
- Property and business owners or tenants; and,
- Interests and/or issues (e.g. active transportation, Bluestem Nature Park, etc.).

The level of stakeholder engagement was determined for each stakeholder tier. Tier 1 internal stakeholders included area Councillors and City departments. Tier 1 external stakeholders included the property owners of neighbouring businesses, churches, and a multi-family residence, neighbourhood Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) groups, Province of Manitoba, and industry, parks, and accessibility and active transportation representatives. The Tier 1 stakeholders were sought after to provide input on the project at stakeholder meetings. Tier 2 stakeholders included the commercial tenants of the neighbouring businesses and residents surrounding the project area. These stakeholders were specifically targeted for the open house event.

### **2.3. Communication Tools**

The City project webpage was launched on January 6, 2017. The webpage included engagement information, a timeline flow chart, background information, relevant documents and links, FAQs, and a map of the project study area. Stakeholders were invited to meetings via direct email invitations and the open house event was promoted via a robust communication strategy that included a number of marketing pieces such as advertisements, a poster drop, and a social media campaign.

### 3. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

#### 3.1. Meeting Details

The consultant team and project manager hosted 16 meetings with Tier 1 internal and external stakeholders from December 2016 through February 2017. At the meetings, the project team introduced the project, discussed the project area, and identified existing vehicular, pedestrian and cycling routes. Meeting participants reviewed the conceptual design ideas and options and were asked to provide feedback. Input from stakeholders was gathered regarding their preferences, needs, priorities, concerns, or potential issues.

Tier 1 internal stakeholders meetings were held with the following: area Councillors, City: Forestry, City Naturalist, Parks, Planners & Urban Designers, Active Transportation, Universal Design Coordinator, Streets Engineers, Streets Maintenance, Winnipeg Transit, Emergency Medical Services.

Tier 1 external stakeholders were comprised of representatives from neighbouring businesses and retail property owners and special interest groups, and included meetings with the following: Manitoba Hydro, Canadian Pacific Railway, The Province of Manitoba, Manitoba Trucking, Omand's Creek / Nature North, Western Financial Group, Shindico Polo Festival, The City of Winnipeg Access Advisory Committee (AAC), Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), Bike Winnipeg, Cadillac Fairview Polo Park, Manitoba Blue Cross, Capital Ford Lincoln, Winnipeg Trails Association, Clarion Hotel, Home Depot, St. John Ambulance, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Donwood Manor West, CAA Manitoba, St. James Anglican Church and Cemetery (via phone), and Canad Inn Polo Park.

#### 3.2. Meeting Results

The information gathered at the 16 stakeholder meetings was considered in the preparation of the preliminary design. Stakeholder feedback can be summarized and grouped as follows:

Connections and Ease of Movement for Pedestrians and Cyclists:

- Connection to surrounding neighbourhoods, existing pathway system, across the river, Polo Park, businesses and bike parking
- Suggestion for protected bike lanes, additional sidewalks and better crossings

Traffic Congestion - Current and Future:

- Consideration for the impact of reducing vehicle lanes in the project area
- Prioritize for motorists' needs - current and future

Protection of Trees and Native Plantings:

- Increase greenspace adjacent to Omand's Creek and create seating areas
- Consider Omand's Creek and Assiniboine River riparian habitats when selecting stabilization methods and materials

Vehicle Routing and Ease of Movement:

- Accommodate trucking needs: flow, yields and turning requirements
- Desire for continuous flow and avoid multiple stops at traffic lights
- Consider access to businesses for staff, customers, and deliveries

**Maintenance:**

- Consider maintenance requirements for plant material in green space and boulevards
- Allow for snow clearing on pedestrian and bike paths

**Safety and Visibility:**

- Public safety a priority in all routing and crossings
- Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) should be considered for all pathways and greenspace areas
- Consider areas for conflicts between user groups (pedestrians, cyclists, cars, trucks and buses)

**On-Street Parking:**

- Concern regarding impacts to on-street parking along Empress Street East, Empress Street, Eastway and Westway

**Inclusive for All Abilities:**

- Universally Accessible, barrier free, meets City Accessibility Design Standards
- Considers the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and appropriate separation (physical, visual, tactile, use of materials)
- Consideration for ease of use (path slopes, intersection layouts, wayfinding, access, potential obstacles)

**Ease of Access a Priority during Construction:**

- Concern for future construction and maintenance activities resulting in major traffic delays, confusion, difficulties with access to businesses, and loss of business
- Concern for construction projects in Polo Park area running concurrently

## **4. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**

### **4.1. Event Details**

Wednesday, April 5, 2017  
CF Polo Park Shopping Centre – Centre Court  
1485 Portage Avenue  
4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

### **4.2. Event Promotion**

The event was promoted with the following suite of methods and materials:

- 4 Facebook posts and 4 Twitter posts from the City account, March 23 - April 5, 2017
- City News Release, March 23, 2017
- E-mail invitation to stakeholders, March 23, 2017
- City of Winnipeg Webpage, March 23, 2017
- Winnipeg Free Press Ad, black & white (3.38" x 4.05"), March 25, 2017
- Canstar Metro Ad, black & white (1/4 Page / 5.06" x 5.69"), March 29, 2017

- Walseley Leaf Ad (Woseley & West Broadway), black and white (4" x 5"), March 31 - April 3, 2017
- Poster Campaign & Mailbox drop, distributed to 320 homes on Denson Place and Strathcona Street (between Portage Avenue and Ellice Avenue.) and 25 posters to local businesses and community centres March 24-27, 2017.



## Empress Street and Overpass Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study Public Open House

The City of Winnipeg began a study in fall 2016 to develop a preliminary design for this project. Key opportunities and considerations include:

- Roadway & Overpass Improvements
- Intersection Design
- Pedestrian & Cycling Routes
- Greenspace Features
- Existing Natural Habitats
- Creek & Riverbank Stabilization



<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <i>Do you travel in the Polo Park area?</i></li><li>■ <i>Do you anticipate using this area for cycling, walking or commuting?</i></li></ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Come and see what this project is all about!</i></b></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, April 5, 2017</b></p> <p><b>CF Polo Park Shopping Centre</b> Centre Court 1485 Portage Avenue Come &amp; Go: 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.</p>
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Questions? Contact:  
Scatliff+Miller+Murray 204-927-3444 [winnipeg@scatliff.ca](mailto:winnipeg@scatliff.ca)  
Those who require alternate formats or ASL interpretation in order to participate should contact Cheryl Dixon by March 31, 2017 at [cdixon@scatliff.ca](mailto:cdixon@scatliff.ca) or 204-927-3444.

For more information, visit us online at: [www.winnipeg.ca/empress](http://www.winnipeg.ca/empress)

- City of Winnipeg Office of Public Engagement Newsletter, March 31, 2017:



**Winnipeg**

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT NEWS

**New Opportunities for Engagement with the City of Winnipeg**

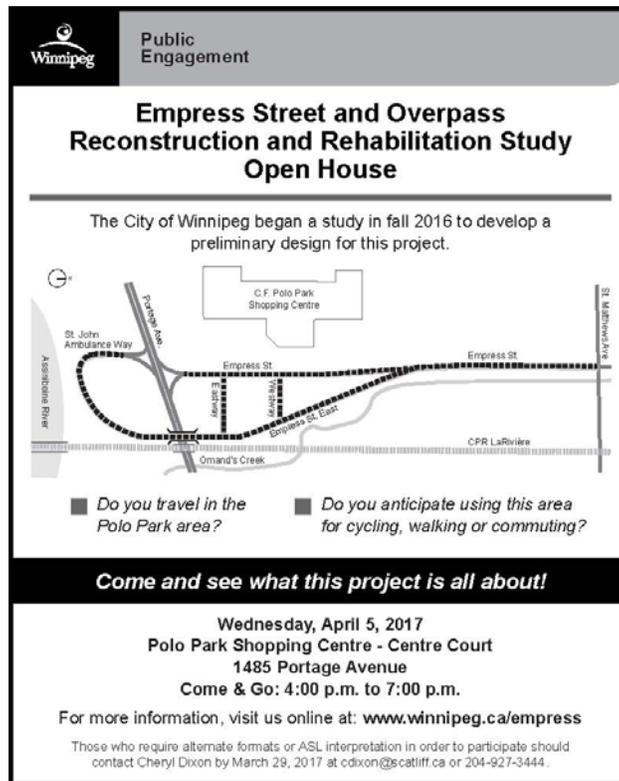
**Empress Street and Overpass Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study Open House**

Winnipeggers are invited to view preliminary design plans for significant improvements to roads and infrastructure surrounding the CF Polo Park shopping centre at an open house on Wednesday, April 5, 2017.

**Date:** Wednesday, April 5, 2017  
**Time:** 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
**Location:** CF Polo Park Shopping Centre - Centre Court, [1485 Portage Avenue](#)

For more information, to fill out a survey or to view the open house presentation boards online, please visit [winnipeg.ca/empress](http://winnipeg.ca/empress).

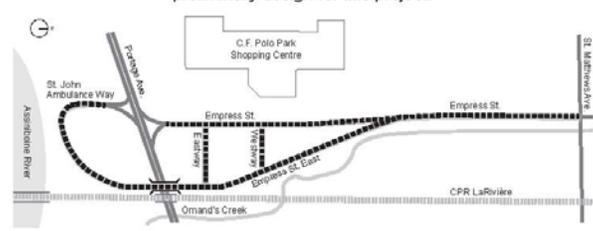
- Sample newspaper ad:



**Winnipeg** Public Engagement

### Empress Street and Overpass Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study Open House

The City of Winnipeg began a study in fall 2016 to develop a preliminary design for this project.



Do you travel in the Polo Park area?      Do you anticipate using this area for cycling, walking or commuting?

**Come and see what this project is all about!**

Wednesday, April 5, 2017  
Polo Park Shopping Centre - Centre Court  
1485 Portage Avenue  
Come & Go: 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit us online at: [www.winnipeg.ca/empress](http://www.winnipeg.ca/empress)

Those who require alternate formats or ASL interpretation in order to participate should contact Cheryl Dixon by March 29, 2017 at [cdixon@scatliff.ca](mailto:cdixon@scatliff.ca) or 204-927-3444.

### **4.3. Event Format**

The public open house was a 'Come & Go' format with presentation boards, a preliminary design map and comment form. The event promotional details and presentation materials boards were posted on the City website on March 23, 2017 along with an online survey. The survey closed on April 21, 2017.

### **4.4. Event Results**

#### **4.4.1. Public Attendance**

225 people viewed presentation boards and concept drawings, and to discuss the project with the project team. In addition, 94 people participated in the online survey from March 23 to April 21, 2017.

#### **4.4.2. General Feedback at Event**

Hosting the event within the project area and at a high profile venue proved to be beneficial for attendance. The centre court location was an extremely visible location within the mall and there was continuous traffic around the display. Many of the participants expressed that they did not know this project was 'in the works' and they were curious to see the proposed improvements. Participants had questions and comments and there was plenty of dialogue regarding circulation for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. There were suggestions for extending the scope of work beyond the project area to make improvements elsewhere, and discussion about the construction staging. Overall, many participants were positive and communicated that they were pleased to be engaged on this project.

#### **4.4.3. Comment Form and Online Survey**

At the public open house on April 5, participants were encouraged to fill out an 8 question comment form. A total of 29 comment forms were completed representing almost 13% of participants. A similar comment form was developed for the online survey with 10 questions. 94 people participated. Although some questions were identical, others were unique to the format of the each event.

- Comment Form:

**Empress Street and Overpass  
Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study  
Public Open House - April 5, 2017  
COMMENT FORM**



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*Your input is important to the success of this project.  
Please complete this form and return it to the registration table.*

**1. How did you hear about this Public Open House Event? (check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Winnipeg Free Press Ad	<input type="checkbox"/> City of Winnipeg Website	<input type="checkbox"/> City of Winnipeg News Release
<input type="checkbox"/> The Wolseley Leaf Ad	<input type="checkbox"/> Email Invitation	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook or Twitter
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Newspaper Ad (The Metro)	<input type="checkbox"/> Poster or Mail-drop	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**2. What is your interest in this project? (check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> I live nearby	<input type="checkbox"/> I visit the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest in road improvements
<input type="checkbox"/> I travel through the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Business owner in the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest in work surrounding waterways
<input type="checkbox"/> I work in the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest in pedestrian and cycling improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:**

**3. I had an opportunity to talk to and/or ask questions of the City of Winnipeg and consultant staff.**

Strongly Agree     Agree     Neutral     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

**4. I understand the reasons for this study.**

Strongly Agree     Agree     Neutral     Disagree     Strongly Disagree

**5. Are there any potential project impacts on you that the City of Winnipeg / project team should consider for this project?**

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*(over please)*

**6. Please provide any other comments you may have regarding this study.**

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**7. Please provide any other comments you may have regarding today's Public Open House Event.**

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**8. Are you interested in receiving further updates about the Empress Overpass project from the City of Winnipeg?**

No

Yes

If yes, please provide your preferred method of contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please hand in this form at the registration table or email to: [winnipeg@scatliff.ca](mailto:winnipeg@scatliff.ca) or fax to: 204-927-3443**

Your personal information is being collected under the authority of 36(1)(b) of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This information will be used to contact you with project updates if you wish and will not be used or disclosed for any other purposes, except as authorized by law. Your contact information will not be made public. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, contact the Corporate FIPPA Coordinator by mail to City Clerk's Department, Administration Building, 510 Main Street, Winnipeg MB, R3B 1B9, or by telephone at 311.

- Survey Content:

*(Information uploaded to City of Winnipeg Project Webpage via Survey Monkey  
Live March 23 until April 21, 2017)*

**Empress Street and Overpass  
Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Study  
Open House Presentation Boards  
On-line Survey Content**



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*Your input is important to the success of this project.  
Please complete the following brief survey.*

**1. Do you plan on attending or did you attend the April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Open House Event in Polo Park Shopping Centre?**

Yes                       No

**2. What is your interest in this project? (check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> I live nearby	<input type="checkbox"/> I visit the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest in road improvements
<input type="checkbox"/> I travel through the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Business owner in the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest in work surrounding waterways
<input type="checkbox"/> I work in the area	<input type="checkbox"/> Interest in pedestrian and cycling improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**3. How did you hear about this Project? (check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Winnipeg Free Press Ad	<input type="checkbox"/> City of Winnipeg Website	<input type="checkbox"/> City of Winnipeg News Release
<input type="checkbox"/> The Wolesey Leaf Ad	<input type="checkbox"/> Email Invitation	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook or Twitter
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Newspaper Ad (The Metro)	<input type="checkbox"/> Poster or Mail-drop	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**4. Were you able to find the information you need?**

Yes                       No

**5. Do you understand the purpose of this study?**

Yes     Somewhat     Neutral     Some confusion     No

**6. Are there any potential project impacts on you that the City/project team should consider?**

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**7. Do you have any other questions or concerns that were not address by the online content?**

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**8. What was the most helpful aspect of the online content?**

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**9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

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**10. If you'd like further updates on this project please provide your contact information:**

If yes, please provided your preferred method of contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Your personal information is being collected under the authority of 36(1)(b) of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This information will be used to contact you with project updates if you wish and will not be used or disclosed for any other purposes, except as authorized by law. Your contact information will not be made public. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, contact the Corporate FIPPA Coordinator by mail to City Clerk's Department, Administration Building, 510 Main Street, Winnipeg MB, R3B 1B9, or by telephone at 311.

#### 4.4.4. Overview of Comment Form and Survey Responses

*Online Question: Do you plan on attending or did you attend the April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Open House Event in Polo Park Shopping Centre? :*

Yes	No
16 (17%)	78 (83%)

*Online and In-person Question: What is your interest in this project? (Check all that apply):*

	I live nearby	I travel through the area	I work in the area
Online	47	70	13
In-person	20	18	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>19</b>
	I visit the area	Business Owner in Area	Interest in ped/cycling improvements
Online	57	0	71
In-person	16	0	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>86</b>
	Interest in Road Improvement	Interest in waterways	Other
Online	50	25	7
In-person	14	11	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9</b>

- 'I travel through the area' was the most popular response followed closely by 'interest in pedestrian and cycling movement' and "I visit the area'.

*Online and In-person Question: How did you hear about this project/public open house event?*

	Winnipeg Free Press Ad	The Wolseley Leaf Ad	Community Newspaper (Metro)
Online	7	6	8
In-person	4	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>

	City of Winnipeg website	Email Invitation	Poster or mail drop
Online	13	25	2
In-person	4	7	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>8</b>
	City of Winnipeg News Release	Facebook or Twitter	Other
Online	12	22	22
In-person	2	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>

- ‘Email invitation’ ranked first followed by ‘social media’ and a combination of the ‘newspaper ads’ and ‘workplace distribution’ (under the other category).

*On-line Question: Were you able to find the information you need? :*

Yes	No
81 (86%)	13 (14%)

*Online and In-person Question: Do you understand the purpose of this study? :*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In-Person Event	15	11	0	0	1
On-line	63	24	3	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (64%)</b>	<b>35 (29%)</b>	<b>3 (2%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>5 (4%)</b>

- 93% of the in-person and on-line participants indicated that they understood the purpose of the study by marking either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’.

*In-person Question: I had an opportunity to talk to and/or ask questions of the City of Winnipeg and consultant staff:*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19 (73%)	4 (15%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	2 (8%)

- 88% of event participants felt that they had an opportunity to talk to and/or ask questions of the City of Winnipeg and consultant staff at the April 5th event.

**Online and In-person Question:** *Are there any potential project impacts on you that the City/project team should consider?*

Many of the comments received on both sets of forms were very detailed and pertained to specific site locations for all long answer questions. A high level summary of the information collected is as follows:

- The in-person and online participants identified the following potential project impacts (many respondents made more than one comment within their response):
  - Just less than half of the comments were related to connections both within the project area and outside the project area. The connections were primarily pedestrian and cyclist based.
- Other recurring responses included:
  - Comments related to issues outside the scope of work for this project including the condition of Bluestem Nature Park (pathways and vegetation).
  - Comments related to safety issues such as desire to have pathways maintained and cleared in winter / universal accessibility, vehicle and pedestrian conflicts, and difficulty for pedestrians to cross Portage Avenue.
  - Comments indicating that participants were impressed, thought the team considered everything, and they were pleased about active transportation improvements.
  - Comments showed concerned with traffic congestion with the new design and concern for a decrease in the number of lanes, and related to the concern for the reduction in on-street parking, concern for the timeline of the project and impacts of construction on traffic volumes, and access to local businesses and desire for improved lighting.

**Online Question:** *Do you have any other questions or concerns that were not addressed by the online content?:*

- Of the 28 responses, 33% of the questions or comments were outside the scope of the project (looking at future projects and connections etc.). The following themes were present in relevant responses:
  - 25% of the comments were related to cycling, for example: routes, bike lane widths, separation and desire direct routes
  - Other comments included desire for universal design, access from the overpass down to Portage Avenue, signage, lighting, construction scheduling and path maintenance.

**In-person Question:** *Please provide any other comments you may have regarding this study:*

- An overview of comments include:
  - Positive support for the pedestrian and cycling improvement
  - Further connections, circulation and signage suggestions
  - Winter maintenance, greenspace development and lighting suggestions

**In-person Question:** *Please provide any other comments you may have regarding today's Public Open House Event:*

- An overview of comments include:
  - Over half the comments were complementary regarding the project or event
  - Suggestions for Option 2 design, better signage for Empress Street exit

*Online Question: What was the most helpful aspect of the online content? :*

- An overview of comments include:
  - 95% were positive comments about the storyboards, clear illustrations and information, diagrams, drawings, informative maps, and easy to read and understand
  - One comment requested more notice for the in-person event

*Online Question: Is there anything else you would like to tell us? :*

- Although some comments were outside of the scope of this study, an overview of relevant comments includes:
  - Over half the comments were positive comments about improvements, the addition of cycling routes, pleased about connections and to have been able to give input
  - Information was shared on current pedestrian routes and suggestions for connections
  - One comment noted that there is too much emphasis on bike lanes and there should be more emphasis on vehicular traffic
  - Other suggestions included: no one-way streets, smart traffic-lights, extending the scope North of St. Matthews Avenue and connections to Westview Park

**1.1.1. Event Photos**

