

Number 14 January 2007

Taking Steps . . .



towards a more



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Walkable Edmonton

Happy New Year! 2006 was a year of change and growth for Walkable Edmonton and 2007 will be an exciting time. Here are a few tidbits from the past few months and looking forward to what the New Year will bring...

- We are energized by Jim Diers' presentations in October here in Edmonton about what was accomplished in Seattle's Department of Neighbourhoods.
- Our Walkable Edmonton Toolkit is almost at print and will be available soon for groups or individuals interested in a made in Edmonton guide to walkability. It will be available in hardcopy as well as CD's and on the website!
- We have just completed the initial meeting of a Walkable Edmonton Advisory group, made up of representatives from

city departments, outside agencies and citizens. This group will help guide the work of Walkable Edmonton in the coming year and will be working on a Walkable Strategy to outline what needs to happen to make Edmonton more Walkable.

- The Smart Choices Program of the Planning & Development Department has implemented a Smart Choices Checklist which includes walkability in reviewing development applications.



- The Transportation Department will also be reviewing the Bicycle Transportation Plan, initially developed in 1992, during 2007. As well they are reviewing the Transportation Master Plan which sets transportation priorities for the City.



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Walkable Highlands 112 Ave. Road Diet



The Communities of Highlands and Bellevue have been working diligently with the Transportation Department to follow up on the outcomes of their community design charrette in April of 2005.

In September the Transportation Department piloted the proposed changes with a series of temporary detours to access the potential traffic impacts of the proposed changes. Traffic surveys were completed to observe the vehicle queue and motorist delays. The results of the surveys showed that motorists were able to safely merge into the travel lane with minimal queuing and delay.

This spring and fall saw a series of open houses hosted by the Transportation Dept. & the Highlands/Bellevue Communities. As expected, reactions from the public were mixed. The headline in the Edmonton Journal's Oct. 15, 2006 edition – "RESIDENTS BATTLE COMMUTERS OVER 112TH AVE. 'ROAD DIET' gives a sense of some of the different perspectives of the users of 112 Ave.

The Transportation Department will review the results of the open houses and present recommendations to City Council early in 2007.



Neighbourhood Revitalization

- The Stony Plain Road Revitalization Program hosted a series of open houses and a stakeholder survey this fall to gather input from citizens on their vision for their community.



- The Alberta Avenue Initiative helped stage an ARTS ALIVE festival on 118 Ave. on Saturday, Oct. 7. Despite cool temperatures there was a good turn out for a wide variety of arts activities and entertainment highlighting the artistic community that lives in the area.



Winter Walk to School Day – Feb. 7



Albertans - pull on your boots and count yourself in - Register the minutes you walked!

Everyone is welcome to join in - Schools, Seniors' Centres, commuters, individuals. Don't hibernate! Dress warm, get outside and enjoy the fresh, crisp Alberta air! On-line registration begins Dec 18, 2006! Go to the S.H.A.P.E website for more information on how you can be involved.



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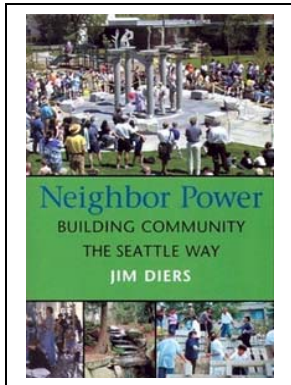
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Jim Diers' Visit to Edmonton

Jim Diers' whirlwind visit to Edmonton saw him speaking to City Staff, Community Leaders, the general public and neighbourhood revitalization champions in a tightly scheduled two days. It is safe to say that anyone who had the opportunity to listen to Jim's enthusiastic stories of what can be accomplished by neighbourhoods and municipalities working in partnership was engaged in thoughts of "how can we make that happen here?"

Our thanks go out to Councillor Janice Melnychuk and the staff of Safedmonton who provided the opportunity for Jim's visit to Edmonton and did the legwork to make it happen!

Jim's new book, Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way is available through the University of Washington Press.



"The Community is at its best when many networks support one another and come together as equals for their common good...The best way to develop a safe and healthy community is to open the door to neighbours, build strong community organizations and forge alliances that link them" – Jim Diers

More Connections

Louise McKinney Riverfront Park

The parkland on the riverfront below the Shaw Convention Centre has seen a great deal of construction in the past season with the creation of a Chinese Garden, the Shumka stage & a riverfront promenade. Unfortunately the construction has necessitated the temporary closure of the main trail through the area, but in the long term the park will have improved amenities and will be able to host a wide range of activities and events. A floating dock structure has been added down on the riverfront to provide better access for boaters and for use by the annual Dragonboat Festival. Construction in the Park will continue through the 2007 season, and hopefully the main multi-use trail should be open in June once that phase of the construction is complete. Click on Ed to look at this year's developments and future plans for the Park.



An Artist's rendering of the Shumka Stage in Louise McKinney Riverfront Park

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"Cyclists were more likely than any kind of commuter to rate their ride as the most pleasant part of their day – 19 percent did so. Only 2 percent of drivers felt the same way. Workers who walked to work were also more likely to enjoy commuting: 61 per cent did." – Stats Canada

My Favourite Walk – Laurie Hackett

I'm a city girl and my favorite walk keeps me on pavement and under street lights. No strolling through the ravines with icky spiders and other crawlies, for me! I live in the Westmount area and my walk takes me from my house straight out to 111th

Avenue. I walk east on 111th Avenue to 124th Street and from there I head south to Jasper Avenue. I walk one block east on Jasper to 123rd Street, cross to the south side of the street and retrace my route from whence I came. This is actually a very nice place to walk. There are a lot of

trees and I can watch the seasons come and go. The trees along the centre boulevard on 124th street are lit. It's really quite pretty. There are a number of shops along the way and it's nice to see the fashions and art change in the store fronts.

Like to share your favourite Walk ... drop us a line!

Walkable Woodcroft – Patricia Grell – Woodcroft Community League

I moved with my family from Devon to Edmonton in order to be closer to the amenities of the city and therefore reduce the amount of time we spent in our car travelling. We wished to become more physically active and also were concerned about the greenhouse gases we were emitting each time we hopped into our car. We chose the community of Woodcroft because so many amenities were within a 5 minute walk of our home: grocery store, swimming pool, indoor and outdoor arenas, parks, playgrounds, library, and doctor and dentist offices. When we moved in however, we found that Woodcroft had become literally over run by vehicle traffic -- 109 ETS buses pass through the community from 5:45 am - 11:05 pm per day and according to a recent Transportation Dept. traffic survey an average of 1,525 vehicles per weekday travel on one collector route (139 St.) while 3,750 vehicles travel per weekday on the other collector route (115 Ave.). On one collector route where our local elementary school is situated, 183 vehicles per day travel at 60 km/hr and higher. On the other collector route where our community league playground and hall are situated, 300 vehicles per day are travelling at 60 km/hr and higher. As Dan Burden, Walkable Communities spokesperson states, in order for a community to become more conducive to walking and biking, "traffic moves on main streets and in neighbourhoods at safe, pleasant, and courteous speeds. Most streets are designed to keep speeds low." Currently, our collectors are designed so that traffic from nearby congested arterials can find a quick cut through route. If our community is to become more walkable we need to address the issue of increasing cut through traffic that is going at faster and faster speeds.

In a recent Winter Walkabout which was conducted by residents with the assistance of Walkable Edmonton, we discovered that our sidewalks were in great need of repair. The upheavals in the sidewalks in the summer are a hazard but in winter they are next to impossible to clear from snow making them treacherous especially for the 30% of our population who are seniors. We also discovered that there were intersections that were in need of curb cuts to make them wheelchair and stroller accessible not to mention easier for parents with children on bikes. We have requested a Summer Walkabout to assess further Woodcroft's walkability when snow is not a factor.

We are looking forward to working with Walkable Edmonton to make Woodcroft a safe and pleasant place for all residents young and old to walk, to bike, and to stay fit. It is hoped that in achieving this goal we will also reduce the amount of noise pollution and greenhouse gases we produce as a community.

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Walkable Winter

It is that time of year again when we have to make a little extra effort to ensure our neighbourhoods stay walkable and safe for ourselves and our neighbours. Please remember that many Edmontonians, particularly seniors and those with disabilities, have greater difficulty getting around in the winter. By keeping your walks ice-free and clear of snow, you make it much easier for everyone to walk to neighbourhood stores or get out for fresh air and exercise.

There is help available for seniors or those with disabilities to get their sidewalks shoveled and there are agencies who would welcome your help!



Planning Academy – Transportation Elective

Curious about Transportation planning?

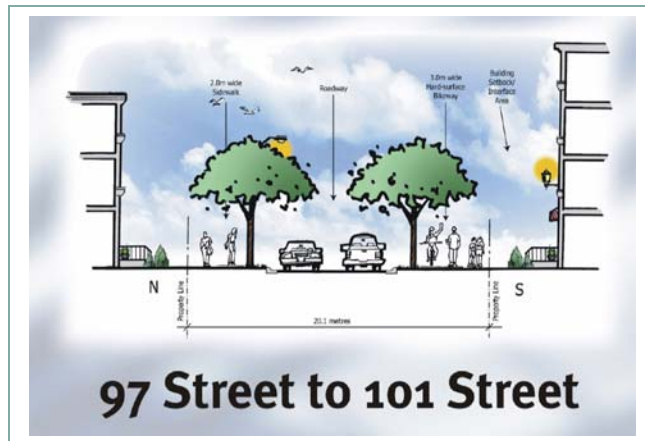
Part of the Planning & Development Dept's new land use planning workshops is an elective exploring transportation planning. This 6 hour workshop covers the ground between the Transportation Master Plan and dealing with local transportation issues...from ring roads to stop signs. Walkable Edmonton was involved in the pilot and we would highly recommend the course to community members who want to have a broader understanding of how the City works to manage transportation issues.

For information on these courses go to the Planning & Development website or call: 496-6242



105 Ave. MU Trail

Planning for the 105 St. Multi Use Trail corridor & streetscape project - 97 St. – 119 St. have been in the works for some time. The City of Edmonton has prepared a preliminary engineering design study for a multi-use trail corridor, landscaping and streetscaping enhancements along 105 Avenue. The design promotes walkability and the use of other non-motorized modes such as cycling and skating. The study was presented to City Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee in early November. Details of the report and recommendations to Council can be found on the City Website.



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Sidewalk Strategy Needed

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Strathcona residents took to the streets in September to protest the lack of north – south sidewalks in their neighbourhood. The area they're mainly concerned with is 98 & 97 Streets, between Whyte Ave. and 92 Ave., a residential area with no continuous sidewalks. Quoted in the Sept. 13, 2006 issue of the Edmonton Examiner, Rob McDonald of the Strathcona Centre Community League had this to say in regards to the current funding for sidewalk repair and installation..."Rather than keep hounding the (City) administration, we have to go after council to give this program more money," "They've got to give a lot more money to the sidewalk program so that these things can just happen, in a steady pattern, filling in the pedestrian grid. Apparently there a great number of old communities where these north-south sidewalks are missing."

To address this common issue in Edmonton and come up with a working plan to prioritize construction of the "missing links" in the sidewalk infrastructure the Transportation Department has hired Stantec Consulting to lead up the process of developing a Sidewalk Strategy. This year long project will identify where sidewalks should be and develop priorities on how these needs should be addressed. There will be a number of opportunities for stakeholder groups such as Community Leagues, schools etc. as well as citizens to be involved in the public process aspect of the project, which will kick off in early 2007. Stakeholder meetings will occur in early February and general public meetings in early March.

Information will be posted on the Transportation Department website as details of the process are finalized.



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.edmonton.ca/walkableedmonton

If you would like to have your name added to our electronic mailing list, please click on the following icon:



If you do not have an e-mail connection we can send you copies by mail. Drop us a line at:

Walkable Edmonton, c/o Ian Hosler
Edmonton Community Services

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