



Medicine Hat



MUNICIPAL WORKS DEPARTMENT

"WHAT WE HEARD" REPORT

SHAPE YOUR CITY EVENT - May 1, 2025

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Riverside 3rd Street North Corridor Enhancement Project

"WHAT WE HEARD"

Shape Your City Event – May 1, 2025

I. Background

Municipal Works Department (MW) engaged with residents of Medicine Hat and shared Conceptual Plans for the Riverside 3rd Street North Corridor Enhancement Project at the Shape Your City event held at the Big Marble Go Centre May 1, 2025.

The project is primarily driven by the deteriorating road structure along the corridor, requiring full removal and replacement of the entire pavement structure. In addition to addressing this core issue, the project also responds to resident concerns and aligns with policy objectives outlined in the Riverside Area Redevelopment Plan (2015), Municipal Development Plan (2020), and City Council Strategic Priorities (2023-2026). Key objectives include:

- Reducing operating speeds
- Improving pedestrian safety at crosswalks
- Enhancing intersection safety
- Providing a dedicated active transportation facility

Invitations were sent to all residents and property owners of the Riverside neighbourhood, to encourage attendance, learn more about the project, and generally ramp up the engagement process early in the planning and preliminary design stages of this project. In total, over 1,000 letters were sent in the mail, and as expected, this led to a very high turnout rate.



II. General Findings

Overall reviews and feedback for the project were quite mixed with opinions both strongly in support, and as expected, in strong opposition to certain aspects of the project. In total, 30 comment cards and 2 letters were submitted to MW for review, and those comments are summarized below along with potential actions, strategies, and items requiring further consideration as we progress towards the 50% design of this project.

The major findings from the engagement event can be summarized into **6** main themes which are outlined below:

1. Curb Extensions – aka “Bulb-outs”

Most common concern is navigating onto and off of 3rd Street with the bulb-out alignment without hitting the curb or entering opposing lane of traffic. Other concerns we heard include:

- Pulling a holiday trailer out from the side-streets will be problematic
- Visibility of the bulb outs in the wintertime and reduced road / lane widths after heavy snow fall events
- High expense perceived to do this
- Won't slow traffic down

○ **Mitigation Strategies:**

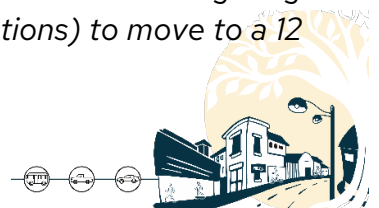
- *In the 50% design stage we will present the turning movements that we are modelling so that residents can see what those movements look like and better understand how vehicles will maneuver around the bulb outs with the design vehicles modelled for. We can display how our design vehicles which include school buses, garbage trucks, and Large F-550 City maintenance trucks, as well as control vehicles such as fire trucks and semi-trailers, which should alleviate the major concerns that people are having;*
- *Review installation of bulb out at each location and place them strategically to support the main project objectives outlined above.*

2. Turning Radius'

Tied to the Bulb-out concern, residents are concerned that their vehicles will either hit the curb causing damage to their vehicle, or having to pull out wide on to oncoming traffic causing a safety hazard while navigating the intersections.

○ **Mitigation Strategies:**

- *We are closely designing and modelling every turning radius within the entire corridor. 9.0 metre radius' are currently proposed, and we are investigating all areas (the commercial district and Altawana intersections) to move to a 12*



metre radius. Again, by visually presenting the turning movements modelled in the design at the 50% design stage, this will aid in addressing these concerns.

3. Loss of Parking

A few residents who live close to intersection corners voiced concerns that they will be losing parking spaces for the bulb out placement.

Currently there is no parking allowed within 5 metres from the near side of a crosswalk, or 5 metres from the end of the curb return radii. With the bump-out largely extending into the existing roadway, this loss may be more perceived than factual.

○ **Mitigation Strategies:**

- *Determine just how much parking is being removed may reduce misconceptions of what will be lost;*
- *Potential to reduce length of far side bulb-outs through intersections to reduce the impact to parking;*
- *Potential to eliminate avenue bulb-outs on the opposite side of the Multi-Use Pathway (MUP). This has already been implemented at the Division Avenue intersection and 1st Avenue NE north legs, as well as the Altawana intersection. Continue to investigate additional locations;*
- *Review installation of bulb-out locations and place them strategically to support the main project objectives outlined above.*

4. Round-About

Some fairly vocal residents were heavily opposed to the conceptual round-about proposed. What we heard were comments similar to:

- *The traffic and turning movements do not support this kind of improvement;*
- *We don't see any issues with that intersection as it operates currently;*
- *The proposed crosswalk locations may create confusion for drivers and actually have the reverse effect as desired;*
- *Drivers "won't go around the circle" and therefore will be shortcutting the roundabout and creating a very un-safe condition;*
- *Snow removal and emergency vehicles will be impacted.*

○ **Mitigation Strategies:**

- *A decision is likely required to be made on the traffic circle being proposed at the intersection of 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue NE. The main reasons for including the round-about is to indicate to traffic that they are entering a traffic pattern change. By slowing traffic down as they enter and exit the traffic circle, and they will no longer be able to carry high speeds through this*



intersection. The other benefit is that it could act as an entry feature to the neighborhood and provide a visually pleasing feature for the project and the area. The downside includes loss of parking, additional signage and pavement marking requirements to maintain, and increased effort for snow clearing operations.

5. Lane Widths

Residents were concerned that the lane widths are too narrow, and will make for unsafe access in and out of parked cars with heavy traffic driving by. Also heard that the 2.4 metre parking lane will not accommodate larger vehicles, like SUVs and full-size trucks.

- Preliminary design is proposing 3.3 metre wide driving lanes with a 2.4 metre parking lane in each direction. These are proposed for the main purpose of slowing traffic down and widening them would reduce the effect of this traffic calming measure. Complete Streets Options report investigated all the different options and scenarios, and recommended this cross-section, which included these lane widths. *Any change needs to be carefully evaluated with respect to the benefits versus the detriments prior to implementation;*
 - Parking lane width does not include the gutter pan width of 300mm from the lip of gutter to the face of curb that drivers can use for additional parking space;
 - A large SUV width ranges upwards of 2.03 – 2.06 metres which are the widths of a Nissan Armada and Chevy Suburban respectively. The 2.4 metre parking lane width, combined with the 0.3 metre gutter pan, provide ample space for parking and maneuvering in and out of parked vehicles safely.
- **Mitigation Strategies:**
- *While an increase in lane widths may be considered at select locations, such adjustments would undermine key objectives of the project, particularly the goal of reducing operating speeds. The proposed lane widths are considered optimal and are consistent with current industry standards.*

6. Active Transportation Infrastructure

Some residents expressed the view that active transportation infrastructure is unnecessary along the corridor, citing a perceived lack of demand in the area.

- **Mitigation Strategies:**
- *Following the adoption of the Active Transportation Strategy, the subsequent 2025 Fall Open House will provide an opportunity to explain how the proposed active transportation infrastructure along this corridor integrates with the broader citywide active transportation network.*

These were the top 6 concerns that need to be addressed, reviewed further, or decided upon.



III. Next Steps

Meaningful public engagement both informs and consults with the public and key stakeholders of the project. By gaining this information from the general public and from residents who live in Riverside, we are able to incorporate some of this feedback into the design of the project, further investigate and respond to the concerns raised, and make the most informed and comprehensive design decisions possible.

Certain aspect of the design are required to meet the key objectives of the project. Curb extensions 'Bulb-outs' for example are necessary to improve the pedestrian safety and act to slow traffic down; two crucial design elements of this project. However, as detailed above, certain locations could potentially have them reduced, or even removed in attempts to balance the concerns that we have heard to date with the design outcomes that are critical to achieve.

In summary, the following **Action Items** will be investigated further with incorporation into the design and were determined to be achievable without overly compromising the key objectives of the project. They include:

1. **The Round-About:**

Based on feedback both from the Shape Your City event, and engagement with the businesses on 3rd Street, the round-about as proposed in the conceptual design seems to be largely unsupported. We will investigate if any other options can be utilized at this intersection that will not require the installation of a round about at this location.

2. **Curb Extensions on the Avenues** opposite the Multi-Use Pathway:

As these are not required to shorten the crossing distance for the active transportation users, the positive impact may not outweigh the tighter turning movements for larger vehicles and recreational vehicles and trailers. Look to remove the bulb outs on the Avenues opposite the MUP.

3. **Curb Extensions along 3rd Street:**

Review each bulb out individually along 3rd Street to determine the impact to on street parking at each location. Bulb outs will be strategically located where required to improve pedestrian safety and certain locations there may be potential to have them removed, or alternatively reduced in terms of return



radiuses and lengths in order to limit the impact to on street parking without compromising the main objectives of the project.

4. **Confirming Lane Widths:**

As outlined in this report, careful consideration has led to the lane widths proposed to achieve one of the key project objectives of this project which is to reduce operating speeds along the corridor. Any increase in lane widths for this reason is not recommended. Appendix B of this document is provided to help visualize how the proposed 11.4 metre road width compares to other roadways in the City.

One adjustment however that could be investigated further in the design of this project is the lane widths at each of the bulb out locations. The Conceptual Plan proposed the 3.3m driving lanes to continue through the bulb outs, but to provide additional driving width at these locations, and for additional turning movement flexibility, we will explore the potential to increase these distances to 3.5m wide. This could potentially be achievable without largely undermining the key objectives of the project.



Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions



Riverside 3rd Street North Corridor Enhancement Project

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why aren't the deep utilities including the water and sewer included in this Project?

The replacement of deep utilities is being considered only where necessary and where conditions warrant it. The existing infrastructure has not yet reached the end of its service life, and generally considered to be in fair condition, so full replacement throughout the entire corridor is not required. All storm sewer catchbasins and leads however, are being replaced to ensure drainage improvements of the roadway remains a major priority and key outcome of the project.

Why aren't crosswalks proposed on every block?

Pedestrians will be able to cross at any intersecting roadway, and this project will make it easier for them to cross 3rd street with the improved sight lines, and reduced crossing distances. However, 'marked crosswalks' will only be installed where higher volume of pedestrians are expected, and necessary to increase the awareness and anticipation of the drivers that pedestrians are likely to cross at these locations.

How many trees are expected to be removed to fit the multi-use path within the right-of-way?

At this stage, no tree removals are planned. The alignment of the Multi-Use Pathway (MUP) has been carefully designed to respect the health of existing trees while maintaining a safe and comfortable space for people walking, rolling, and biking.



Can every crosswalk also have a ‘push button’ flashing light installed?

Rapid Flashing Beacons (RFBs) are installed at select crossing locations where additional safety measures are warranted, such as high pedestrian use, low crossing opportunities, limited visibility, roadway geometry or other safety considerations. It is only recommended to have these where they are warranted, otherwise drivers become desensitized to them if they are misused, thus reducing their effectiveness. Locations are being considered where they may be warranted, which include, but not necessarily limited to, the MUP crossing at 5th Avenue NW, the Division Avenue (Gas King crossing), and the mid-block crossing in front of St. Joseph’s Care Facility.

Will the City be conducting Snow Removal of the Multi-use path in front of my house?

Yes, the City will be removing snow along the multi-use path according to the priority for pathway snow removal in place at the time of the snowfall event.

Will this project be incorporating improvements to the boulevard area specific to the landscaping adjacent to my property? And will the City be extending my existing walkway to connect to the new MUP?

Yes, careful consideration will be made for each location where the boulevard space will be extended or altered to match the existing conditions as most suitable. Connections from existing walkways to the MUP will be constructed where required within the boulevard space.

Why is the road being “narrowed?”

The road is not being “narrowed” so much as being right-sized or optimized to improve safety. The current road is much wider than necessary, which can lead to higher vehicle speeds, reduced attention from drivers, and increased risk for everyone using the road including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The updated design maintains on-street parking on both sides while calming traffic and improving visibility. This supports a safer, more livable street environment.



Will I be able to safely navigate the intersections without hitting the curb or entering the oncoming lane of traffic?

Yes. Intersections are being carefully designed to accommodate a range of vehicles, including school buses, garbage trucks, and maintenance vehicles. These designs ensure safe, efficient turning movements for all typical road users. Stay tuned for more information regarding these traffic movements at the 2025 Fall Open House.

What is the purpose of a round-about at the intersection of 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue NE?

A round-about is being explored at this intersection to improve safety, reduce vehicle speeds, and create a more predictable traffic flow. Round-about encourages drivers to slow down, which reduces the risk of collisions, and improves safety for pedestrians and cyclists by minimizing conflict points and enhancing visibility. Also by reducing the speed at which vehicles enter the traffic calmed corridor, this in turn will promote slower speeds throughout the entire length of the corridor.

Will I lose any parking adjacent to my residence?

We're working to minimize any changes to on-street parking as the design progresses. In most cases, features like curb extensions (or "bulb-outs") are planned within the existing roadway space and won't significantly affect the overall availability of parking.



Appendix B:

Lane Width Examples by Comparison



LANE WIDTH EXAMPLES



6th Street SE in front of a day care facility – road width 10.5 metre
If parking lanes utilize 2.4 metre on either side, this leaves 2.85 metre driving lanes



8th Street NE – road width 10.0 metre





1st Street NW: 10.7 – 11.0 metre width

And we've heard from residents that 1st Street has an issue with speeding currently

