



The Future of 16 Avenue N.W.

Communications & Engagement Summary
Spring 2021

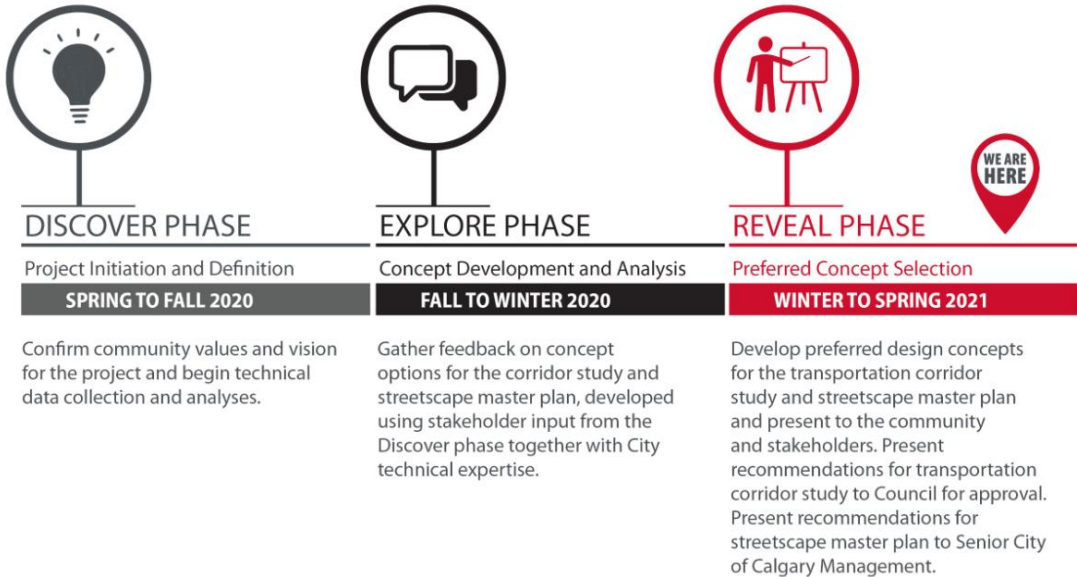


Introduction

The Future of 16 Avenue N.W. project developed a long-term vision for the 16 Avenue N.W. corridor between Sarcee Trail and Crowchild Trail. The project had two distinct deliverables, including a transportation corridor study for the entire corridor, plus a Streetscape Master Plan for the portion of 16 Avenue N.W. in Montgomery. The project study area was divided into three segments: the West Segment (Sarcee Trail to 49 Street), the Main Street Segment (through Montgomery from 49 Street to 43 Street), and the East Segment (43 Street to Crowchild Trail).

The engagement strategy for the project was informed by the Transportation Corridor Study Policy and Main Streets Program. A three-phase engagement process first introduced the project and sought to understand community and City priorities, then identified and evaluated concepts (see Project Timeline graphic below). Recognizing the very different environments and stakeholders in the distinct geographic areas in the West, Main Street, and East Segments of the project, the information and feedback activities were organized into these three specific sections of the study area in each phase.

Timeline





Our Engagement and Communications Approach:

The project team took implemented an integrated communication and engagement program from February 2020 to May 2021.

Inclusive and integrated engagement: The project combined engagement for the corridor study and Main Street plans together as a single project for stakeholders to provide input on. This was done by incorporating and refining ongoing or very near-term initiatives into the short-term plan. Additionally during the engagement we looked to better serve citizens, communities and customers through our program approach in a way that was cohesive, collaborative and integrated, and works together as “One” for “Calgary”. We ensured coordination and collaboration with other City departments to ensure a One City/ One Voice approach.

Meaningful and purposeful engagement: This project demonstrated iterative engagement in which each round of engagement provided inputs that were used to develop options and recommendations in the next phase of engagement. Citizen priorities contributed the recommended plan and were identified in the engagement materials. Engagement was directly tied to project deliverables and so was readily used in each phase of the project between phases of engagement.

Information and education through communication: In order to provide citizens with a fulsome understanding of the project, a combination of communication tactics included narrated presentations, hotspot maps, and a virtual open house were utilized to provide an increased understanding of the project information. Additionally the project team created customized visual presentations and maps for specific property owners for clear and transparent conversations specific to their properties.

Citizen focused outreach activities: In order to reach stakeholders for the project, a variety of outreach activities took place which included: on-site signage promoting the project and engaging community organizations (Community Association/BIA/University of Calgary/Foothills Hospital) and providing materials for them to share with their networks. The project demonstrated its citizen focus by combining the engagement for the two plans making it simpler for citizens to provide input on both plans, and to see how they relate to each other. Checking-in on What We Heard reports from past engagements (as demonstrated in Phase 1) was conducted to acknowledge the effort and input of citizens already received by The City. The project team also demonstrated strong due diligence for more impacted stakeholders by hosting 1:1 individual, virtual meetings for impacted property owners, as well as socially distanced on-site meetings for stakeholders who had a virtual barrier to participation.

Innovative and flexible approach: The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on in-person gatherings required the project to pivot to fully online engagement which demonstrated a flexible approach. As a result of engagement having to be conducted only online, innovative online tactics had to be explored in order to showcase the project details in a way that was accessible



and understandable for stakeholders. This included online tactics such as: narrated presentations, hotspot maps, and a virtual open house. While these tactics are not totally new to The City, they were previously only used on the very largest of City projects; however, these efforts were made to ensure an increased understanding of the project information (not just static information on the website) in this new online only environment.

Respect for diversity, inclusion and culture

The engagement program was designed to be respectful of the diversity of people living, working and spending time in Calgary. To make the engagement as inclusive as possible, the following steps were taken to remove barriers to participation:

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple in-person opportunities were made available in conjunction with online engagement.
- To comply with the public health guidelines due to the COVID-19 pandemic, engagement was then conducted virtually with an option to dial in to events or provide feedback by calling 311.
- To ensure virtual events were accessible, we created an accessibility tip sheet for Microsoft Teams to help improve user experience and enable assistive technologies like auto translation, closed captioning and screen reader compatibility.
- The City of Calgary's online engage portal used different formats, including videos and interactive maps, which allowed participants to engage based on their capacities and interests.
- All video presentations that were uploaded to YouTube had closed captioning and translation features enabled.
- The virtual open house was designed to maximize information sharing and the opportunity for the public to provide feedback with the following approach:
 - Option to dial into meetings or call 311 to provide input, for those without access to a computer;
 - Question and answer session directly with project team and subject matter experts; and
 - Events were recorded and posted online for those who couldn't attend at the scheduled times.

Throughout the project, we engaged with Montgomery residents and Calgarians-at-large, community associations, business improvement areas, local business owners along 16 Avenue, and the Ward 7 office. We also took extra care to ensure our approach was meaningful and inclusive to participation.

During the first phase of engagement (Discover), we met with key external stakeholders and the public to introduce the project, and provide them an opportunity to share issues and ideas for the project area. It also gave us an opportunity to acknowledge what was heard from previous City and community-led engagement initiatives, and confirm community priorities and desired project outcomes. The input we received was used to develop, confirm and then refine the guiding principles and goals for the project.

The purpose of the second phase of engagement (Explore) was to meet with key external stakeholders and the public to provide them with a summary of what we heard in Phase 1, present the concept options, and evaluate them against the project’s principles. This phase included online engagement and various targeted meetings.

The purpose of the third phase of engagement (Reveal) was to meet with key external stakeholders and the public to provide a summary of what we heard in Phase 2, present the short-, medium- and long-term recommended plans, and evaluate them against the project’s principles. This phase included a virtual open house, online engagement and various targeted meetings.

Communications throughout the project focused on supporting the engagement process and included a combination of grassroots marketing and paid advertising to generate awareness and encourage participation. Tactics such as road signage, sandwich boards along pathways, social media, postcards, registered mail, community newsletter submissions, and electronic updates, garnered 18,265 views to the engage portal, resulting in 1,011 contributions across all phases.

Engagement Phase 1 – Discover

The purpose of the first phase of engagement was to meet with key external stakeholders and the public to exchange information regarding the project, to provide them with an opportunity to share issues and ideas within the corridor, and to confirm community priorities and desired outcomes for the project.

In the years prior to this project, many City- and community-led engagement initiatives involved stakeholders along the project area. Issues and ideas identified by the community in these previous projects were





acknowledged in engagement activities in this phase and reconfirmed with participants. Input received in Phase 1 was used to confirm and refine a draft vision of guiding principles and goals for the project.

Project goals presented to the public during Phase 1 engagement are as follows.

Principle – Social and Healthy Lifestyle (during Phase 1)

Positively impact the social environment including human and environmental health by creating spaces where people can connect, supporting physical activity and providing access to nature.

1. Improve the comfort of public space by enhancing the tree canopy.
2. Support a healthy urban environment with a variety of resilient plantings.
3. Create places that support social gathering and interaction.
4. Design for public safety and physical comfort of all users.

Principle – Mobility and Function (during Phase 1)

Improve 16 Avenue N.W. for those who walk, bike, drive and take transit to safely connect people to community and city-wide destinations.

5. Provide pedestrian and cycling connections to link destinations along the corridor.
6. Maintain functionality of transit services or other high occupancy vehicles.
7. Facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods and accommodate future growth and development.
8. Design all pedestrian facilities to be comfortable and accessible.

Principle – Character and Identity (during Phase 1)

Boost economic vitality by encouraging redevelopment opportunities, promoting investment and bringing more people to destinations along the corridor.

9. Provide opportunities for showcasing the diversity of communities, residents and businesses.
10. Foster a sense of arrival and place through design and materials.
11. Strengthen north-south connections across the corridor.
12. Reflect community identity in the Main Street design.

Principle – Economic Vitality (during Phase 1)

Create streets that establish a sense of place and offer memorable experiences for both residents and visitors.

13. Create a flexible and adaptable public realm to stimulate investment that encourages a vibrant diversity of businesses.

14. Improve street interface and explore parking opportunities while sustaining access to businesses for all users.
15. Leverage storefront visibility from the corridor to encourage people to see, stop and stay.
16. Maintain the role of 16 Avenue NW as a critical economic east-west connector for goods movement in north Calgary.

The Discover phase of engagement included:

- A walking tour with members of the Montgomery Community Association and the Montgomery on the Bow Business Improvement Area (BIA) on February 8, 2020;
- A public open house held at the Montgomery Community Association on March 11, 2020; and;
- Online engagement from March 14 to April 20, 2020, at engage.calgary.ca.



The period for providing input online was extended to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic at the time. Eight participants came on the walking tour, 65 participants attended the open house and 76 respondents provided comments online.

What We Heard

Key takeaways from Phase 1 public engagement include:

- Maintain traffic flow along 16 Avenue;
- Improve pedestrian crossings (safety, frequency);
- Provide connections to the river pathway system;
- Provide better, wider sidewalks that are separated from the roadway;
- Provide safer turning for vehicles, maintain traffic flow;
- Showcase river valley and entry into the city; and
- Enhance trees, greenery and other distinguishing features.

In addition to the key takeaways above, there was overall skepticism that 16 Avenue is an appropriate location for gathering given the volume and noise of traffic anticipated. Rather, participants expressed that Bowness Road, Edworthy Park and Shouldice Park are better locations for gathering in comparison to 16 Avenue and that it would be more valuable as a connector to the Bowness Road (Montgomery) Main Street and the Bow River valley through improvements to the pedestrian, transit, and active mode environments.



As such, the key outcome from Phase 1 was the refinement of project goals to reflect the clarification of 16 Avenue's role in the road network and as a Main Street as discussed below.

Refined Project Goals

Based on participant feedback received during Phase 1 engagement, the goals were refined as shown below. Overall, similar goals were combined, language was refined, and the role of the 16 Avenue Main Street as a connection to the Bowness Road (Montgomery) Main Street (rather than a focal point / key Main Street in of itself) was reflected in the finalized project goals.

Principle – Social and Healthy Lifestyle

1. Improve the comfort of public spaces by enhancing the tree canopy.
2. Maintain the health and resilience of parks and green spaces with plants that reflect the natural landscape.
3. Design public spaces that are vibrant, feel safe and encourage social connection.

Principle – Mobility and Function

4. Improve walking and wheeling connections to key destinations along and across 16 Avenue
5. Improve comfort and access to transit stops or other high occupancy vehicles.
6. Facilitate efficient movement of people and goods along and across 16 Avenue, and accommodate future growth and development.
7. Design walking and wheeling facilities to be safe, comfortable and accessible.

Principle – Character and Identity

8. Provide opportunities to showcase the diversity of communities, residents and businesses.
9. Reflect the unique community identity of Montgomery in the Main Street design including fostering a sense of arrival, and encouraging people to stop, see and stay.

Principle – Economic Vitality

10. Create an adaptable public realm to improve street interface, stimulate investment and encourage business diversity.
11. Provide parking opportunities that sustain access to businesses.

Details of the public feedback can be found in the Phase 1 What We Heard Report in the link at the end of this report.



Engagement Phase 2 – Explore

The purpose of the second phase of engagement was to meet with key external stakeholders and the public to provide them with a summary of what we heard in Phase 1, and present and gather feedback on the concept options developed for the project.

For the second phase of engagement, an opportunity to provide input online was offered from October 26 to November 22, 2020, at engage.calgary.ca, The City's online engagement portal. 151 respondents provided comments online in this timeframe. Due to a technical error on the engage portal page, an opportunity for further comment on the Main Streets Segment was provided from January 6 to 18, 2021. 35 respondents provided comments online in this timeframe.

Over both periods a total of 186 responses were received through the online portal. Landowners identified as potentially impacted by one or more of the concept options were notified by registered mail and invited to one-on-one virtual meetings with the project team. Two landowner meetings were held during Phase 2.

What We Heard

Using The City's online engagement portal, the public was shown plan and cross-section views of the options and asked to evaluate how well they felt design features (characteristics) of each option supported (or did not support) the project principles. The public was also asked the following questions about each option:

- What do you like about the option?
- What do you not like about the option?
- How would you improve the option?

Key themes heard during Phase 2 public engagement include:

- **Traffic Signals:** Participants largely expressed concerns about the increased number of traffic lights in the Main Street Segment causing increased congestion.
- **Traffic Flow:** Participants wanted to see solutions that managed traffic flow and or supported forecasted volumes. Many were worried about congestion, some as drivers looking to avoid congestion, some as pedestrians who felt the congestion and resultant idling would create a poor and fume-filled pedestrian environment.
- **Travel Lanes:** Participants had mixed reactions to the potential number of travel lanes shown in the options. Some felt that four lanes helped to maintain a community feel. Others felt that six lanes improved traffic flow and created the opportunity for dedicated lanes for transit, parking or active modes of transportation.

- **Left-Turns:** Many participants liked the addition of protected, separated or signalized left-turns off of 16 Avenue. There were some comments to add left turn bays from the avenues in Montgomery onto 16 Avenue.
- **Access:** Participants had mixed responses on the idea of some reduced access to community streets (in the West and Main Street Segments). Some participants felt it restricted resident movements too much, others liked that it could reduce cut-through traffic in the community and improve traffic flow on 16 Avenue.
- **Active Transportation:** Generally, participants liked the enhanced pedestrian and bike crossings. Some wanted to see pedestrian overpasses near 43 Street and 29 Street N.W. Some participants expressed a desire for wheeling facilities separate from pedestrian facilities to reduce conflicts between people who walk and wheel. The increased opportunities for pathway connectivity in the concept options, both missing links and connections to the river pathway system, were well received by participants.
- **Natural Elements:** Participants liked the addition of trees, greenery and plants to the corridor, some wanting to see even more than was shown. Some concerns were expressed that the health and sustainability of added landscaping would not be maintained.

Details of the public feedback can be found in the Phase 2 What We Heard Report in the link at the end of this report.

Engagement Phase 3 – Reveal

The purpose of the third phase of engagement was to meet with key external stakeholders and the public to provide a summary of what we heard in Phase 2 and present and gather feedback on the recommended plans. For the third phase of engagement, an opportunity to provide input online was offered from April 12 – May 2, 2021 at engage.calgary.ca. During this time the project received 194 responses from 115 contributors.

The project team also hosted a 'Virtual Open House' that was attended by 47 participants who viewed a presentation and were able to ask questions directly to the project team. The event was recorded and uploaded to engagement portal page and received 43 views. Landowners identified as potentially impacted by one or more of the recommended plans were notified by registered mail and invited to one-on-one virtual meetings with the project team. Approximately 8 landowner meetings were held during Phase 3.



What We Heard

Using The City's online engagement portal, the public was shown short-term, medium-term, and long-term recommended plans for each segment (East, Main Street, West). Stakeholders were then asked to evaluate how well they felt the plans met the project principles for the medium-term and long-term recommended plans. The public was also asked the following questions about each plan:

- Is there anything else the project team should know about the short-term/medium-term/long-term plan from your perspective?

Key themes heard during Phase 3 public engagement include:

Short-term plan (Focus on safety)

- Participants like the left-turn improvements (e.g. turn bays or dedicated signals) onto or off of 16 Avenue to make it easier for residents to enter or leave the community. An area of concern was changing the access at Montgomery Avenue to be right-in-right out only. There was a suggestion to consider peak hour left-turn restrictions.
- Traffic on Home Road remains an area of concern for community residents. The dedicated left turn signal on 16 Avenue is seen by some to encourage cut-through traffic.
- Participant sentiment was mixed on reducing the speed limit: some applauded the speed limit changes identified in the plan; some wanted to see different locations for the speed changes to start or stop; and others did not want to see any reductions in posted speed.
- Participant sentiment was also mixed on the dual turn from Bowness Road to 16 Avenue. Some liked the idea while others were not convinced that it would be an improvement.
- Another concern identified was that there are not enough improvements to pathways or sidewalks in the short-term.

Medium-term plan (Focus on public realm and connectivity)

Overall, participants felt the medium-term plan meets the project goals and principles. Participants were enthusiastic about the improvements to, and enhanced connectivity of, pathways and sidewalks as well as the added trees and plantings.

- Some participants were concerned that there are too many driveways that cross the multi-use pathway; others were concerned that reduced accesses would not support businesses in the area.
- There was some interest in seeing dedicated wheeling infrastructure to separate people who walk from people who wheel.



- Participants expressed a desire to see planting of trees, continuous pathways and installation of one or more pedestrian overpasses moved from the medium-term plan to the short-term.

Long-term plan (Focus on completing the corridor)

Overall, participants felt the long-term plan meets the project goals and principles. Participants were enthusiastic about the improvements to, and enhanced connectivity of, pathways and sidewalks as well as the added trees and plantings.

- Participant sentiment was mixed on the number of lanes in the long-term plan:
 - Participants liked improved flow of traffic for ease of getting to their desired destinations and focusing “cut-through” traffic onto 16 Avenue rather than community streets; while
 - Others were worried that a wider road is too car-centric and will discourage pedestrians and residents from using or crossing 16 Avenue, and will disconnect the community from each other.
- For businesses who rely on the travelling public, access was important, and some concerns were expressed about moving access to side streets in the long-term plan

Communication strategies and tactics

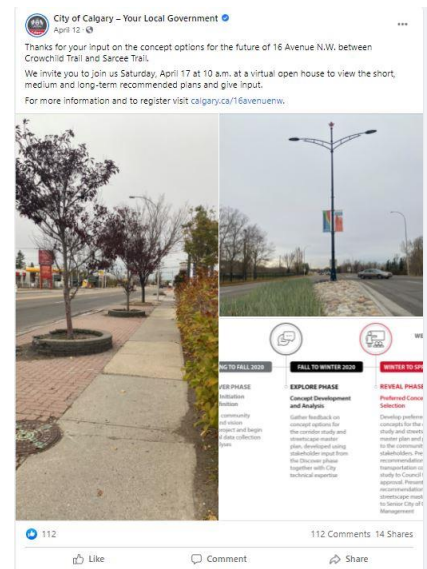
The communications strategy for the project focused on supporting the phased engagement approach. Tactics were designed to create awareness and understanding of the project, and to encourage participation in engagement activities. Communications focused on achieving the following goals:

- Provide stakeholders the information they need to participate meaningfully throughout the three phases of the project. Participants could access relevant and timely information including project background, goals and principles, and materials developed to help build participant understanding at specific times in the process. For example, in phase two, a narrated video was developed to share the benefits and trade-offs of the concept options. Several tactics supported this goal including:
 - A webpage on calgary.ca and a page on the engage portal that provided clear and concise project information as well as ongoing information about engagement activities and outcomes;
 - Project information tools such as a map providing information on related projects happening close to the project area and frequently asked questions;

- Engagement display boards that were used at engagement events and posted online to tell the story of the project process, convey complex technical information regarding concept development in plain language and illustrate the recommended changes in the project area that resonated visually with the audience; and
 - A project email update was delivered throughout the project and provided pertinent information regarding background data and engagement opportunities.
- Demonstrate openness throughout the project by providing transparency to the decision-making process. Communications in engagement material focused on ensuring that stakeholders and the public could clearly see where and how their input was being used helped to build understanding and line of sight. Several tactics supported this goal including:
 - A project timeline infographic demonstrated how public input and technical analysis were working together to produce outcomes and move ideas to short-, medium- and long-term recommend plans;
 - Icons, graphics, charts, and renderings helped to share information visually;
 - If-not-why-not explanations in the frequently asked questions document explained why ideas would not move forward for further exploration; and
 - What We Heard reports illustrated the input that was received through each engagement phase and included summaries of input and verbatim recordings.
- Demonstrate responsiveness to stakeholder issues and concerns. Several tactics supported this goal including:
 - A project email address and the 311 information line were used to connect interested Calgarians directly to the project team. We undertook our best efforts to actively listen to concerns and respond to them in a timely manner.
 - Community associations and the Montgomery Business Improvement Area (BIA) were provided an opportunity to connect with the project team prior to public engagement to view the project material being presented and have questions answered.
 - When property impacts were identified, registered mail was sent to impacted property owners. They too, were provided an opportunity to meet with the project team prior to public engagement to understand what the impact meant to their property and have concerns addressed.

A marketing plan was developed to ensure engagement opportunities were widely promoted in the adjacent communities and beyond. Tactics included:

- Road signage, including bold signs and variable message boards, placed at key locations in adjacent and surrounding communities to target people who drive through the project area;
- Sandwich boards positioned in Edworthy Park to target people who walk and wheel along the Bow River pathway;
- Updates submitted to be published in community association newsletters to target residents in communities bordering the project area;
- Paid Facebook advertisements developed to target those who live or frequent the project area;
- Social media including Facebook and Twitter posts developed to target The City of Calgary following base;
- Interested Calgarians had an opportunity to register for project email updates delivered right to their inbox;
- Postcards mailed to businesses along the Montgomery Main Street in phase three to ensure businesses were informed about the medium- to long-term property impacts; and
- Website updates ensured that the latest information about engagement opportunities were available to all Calgarians.



Combined together the communication strategy provided support for the engagement process by ensuring that stakeholders and the public were well informed about the project, could clearly see how they were influencing the process and its outcomes, and understood exactly how and where they could be involved.

What did we do and who did we talk to?

Throughout the entire project, we held two open houses (1 in-person, 1 virtual), numerous targeted stakeholder meetings (CA, BIA, Adjacent Businesses, Adjacent Landowners), a community walking tour, and conducted three online engagement opportunities. In total, the engagement portal had over 18,000 page views. The engagement opportunities (online portal and targeted stakeholder meetings) received over 1,000 ideas and contributions across all phases.

Phase 1: Discover		
Targeted stakeholder meetings		Metrics
Walking Tour with Community Association (CA) & Business Improvement Area (BIA)	February 8, 2020	Approximately 8 participants
Public session		Metrics
Open House	March 11, 2020	65 participants
Online engagement		Metrics
Online engagement	March 14 – April 20, 2020	5,135 page visits with 240 contributions from 76 contributors
Engagement promotion		Metrics
Social media including Facebook and Twitter	To target those who live or frequent the area	230,579 impressions and 5,663 clicks
Bold sign	To target those who drive through the area	9
Community newsletter submission	To target community residents	N/A
Phase 2: Explore		
Targeted stakeholder meetings		Metrics
Meetings with Community Association (CA) & Business Improvement Area (BIA)	Q4, 2020	Approximately 10 participants
Adjacent Landowners	Q4, 2020	2 meetings
Online engagement		Metrics
Online engagement	October 26 – November 22, 2020	5,409 page visits with 475 contributions from 151 contributors
	January 6 – 18, 2021	1,308 page visits with 93 contributions from 35 contributors



Engagement promotion		Metrics
October 26 – November 22, 2020		
Social media including Facebook and Twitter	To target those who live or frequent the area	328,430 impressions and 4,804 clicks
E-newsletter	To target interested Calgarians subscribing to project updates	18 subscribers
Bold sign and variable message board	To target those who drive through the area	5 bold signs and 2 variable message boards
Sandwich board placed in Edworthy Park	To target those who walk and wheel along the Bow River pathway	2
Poster to be placed on information bulletins	Emailed to project stakeholders such as the University of Calgary, Foothills Hospital, Tom Baker Cancer Center, Health Sciences Center, etc.	Not applicable
Community newsletter and electronic update submission	To target community residents through the communication channels of project stakeholders, adjacent community associations, Ward 7 office, and the business improvement association	Not applicable
Registered mail	To connect with potentially impacted property owners	Not applicable
January 6 – 18, 2021		
Social media including Facebook and Twitter	To target those who live or frequent the area	145,144 impressions and 639 clicks
E-newsletter x 2	To target interested Calgarians subscribing to project updates	54 subscribers
Community newsletter and electronic update submission	To target community residents through the communication channels of project stakeholders, adjacent community associations, Ward 7 office, and the business improvement association	Not applicable

Phase 3: Reveal		
Targeted stakeholder meetings		Metrics
Meetings with Community Association (CA) & Business Improvement Area (BIA)	Q2, 2021	Approximately 10 participants
Adjacent Landowners & Businesses	Q1/Q2, 2021	Approximately 8 meetings
Public Session		Metrics
Virtual Open House	April 17, 2021	47 participants
Online engagement		Metrics
Online engagement	April 12 – May 2, 2021	4,696 page visits with 194 contributions from 115 contributors
Engagement promotion		Metrics
Social media including Facebook and Twitter	To target those who live or frequent the area	394,441 impressions and 1,519 clicks
E-newsletter x 2	To target interested Calgarians subscribing to project updates	65 subscribers
Bold sign and variable message board	To target those who drive through the area	5 bolds signs and 2 variable message boards
Sandwich board placed in Edworthy Park	To target those who walk and wheel along the Bow River pathway	2
Postcard	To target businesses in the Main Street Segment	122
Poster to be placed on information bulletins	Emailed to project stakeholders such as the University of Calgary, Foothills Hospital, Tom Baker Cancer Center, Health Sciences Center, etc.	Not applicable
Community newsletter and electronic update submission	To target community residents through the communication channels of project stakeholders, adjacent community associations, Ward 7 office,	Not applicable

	and business improvement association	
Registered mail	To connect with impacted property owners	Not applicable

Full engagement reports

The full What We Heard Reports from each phase with verbatim comments can be found here:

- **Phase one engagement**
 - [What We Heard Report – Discover Phase](#)
- **Phase two engagement: Explore the Project**
 - [What We Heard Report – Explore Phase](#)
- **Phase three engagement: Reveal the Project**
 - [What We Heard Report – Reveal Phase](#)

Lessons Learned

While the majority of the engagement and communications for the project was successful, there were areas that could be improved on for future projects including:

- Ensuring online engagement content review is conducted thoroughly and by all team members. During Phase 2, a few questions were erroneously omitted from the online engagement, which resulted in ‘Phase 2B’ of going back out to engage on the questions missed, and resulted in a slight schedule change.
- Due to COVID-19 pandemic, we had to rethink how the open house could be organized in the virtual environment. We put a lot of effort into ensuring the engagement event went well. Important details of preparation and implementation included:
 - Ensuring project team members had access to the back-end programming well in advance of the event;
 - Role clarification as well as an understanding of corresponding tools in Microsoft Teams required to run the event;
 - Scheduling dry runs to help prepare and identify technical issues;
 - Providing a project team briefing before the event on frequently asked questions, stakeholder concerns, key messaging, and, roles and responsibilities; and
 - Providing a project team debriefing after the event on what went well, what could be done differently next time, key themes we heard, and opportunities to address concerns or misinformation.
- Although the virtual open house went well, it was limited in that participants could only ask questions through the chat bar. The question was answered to the best of the project team members’ ability but the opportunity for clarifying and ensuring the answer fulfilled the participant’s needs did not exist.