

**INQUIRY RESPONSE DATE: March 21, 2025****SUBJECT: Traffic Calming Information**

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**INQUIRY DATE**

March 18, 2025

**COUNCIL MEMBER**

Councillor vanNieuwkerk

**INQUIRY**

Please provide a summary of the public feedback and the key findings and recommendations from the engineering assessments conducted in late 2024 that informed the decision to install curbing on 56A St, 55th Ave, and Rue Montalet.

**RESPONDING DEPARTMENT**

Infrastructure

**RESPONSE**

Feedback from community engagement, key findings and the improved traffic calming measures for 56A Street are provided below:

**Community Engagement and Feedback**

The temporary traffic calming measures implemented over the previous two summers (2023 and 2024) have drawn some criticism, as is expected with any change to traffic; however, there has also been some favorable feedback. Most of the concerns remark that the traffic calming curbs create a disruption to the flow of traffic and force individuals to pay more attention, drive with more caution, and reduce their speed. Public engagement survey results (636 respondents) are summarized below:

- **Resident Familiarity:** A significant portion of respondents (85.7%) felt confident or very confident in understanding what curb extensions are and their role in traffic safety.
- **How you Encounter Curb Extensions:** Most respondents (88.9%) encounter the curb extensions as a driver, (3.4%) as a pedestrian, and (1.5%) as a cyclist.
- **As a Pedestrian:** Pedestrians noted that they did not notice a difference or feel safer with the curb extensions in place.
- **As a Cyclist:** 11% of Cyclists felt safer with the curb extensions and 89% did not feel safer.
- **Driver Behaviour Changes:** Among drivers, 20% reported slowing down when approaching curb extensions, and 8% became more aware of pedestrians near intersections. This data is based on self-reporting, which carries some limitations.
- **Support for Traffic Safety Measures:** 83% of respondents indicated they were very unlikely or unlikely to support additional traffic safety measures, such as more curb extensions.
- **Perceived Effectiveness:** 84% of respondents viewed the existing curb extensions as "not so effective" or "not at all effective" in improving pedestrian safety.

While the temporary traffic calming curbs were clearly not a preferred device with the surveyed residents, this type of self-reported public survey is not statistically relevant and known to encourage

only those with concerns to contribute input versus those who are content with the changes. Relying solely on the feedback from those who are upset with the traffic disruptions, dismisses the traffic research and supporting physical data summarized below that provides factual data to support the efficacy of the low-cost devices.

Many respondents suggested replacing the curb extensions with a roundabout while others suggested additional police enforcement to slow drivers and the continued installation of Rapid Flashing Beacon pedestrian crossing lights. Several residents also suggested the use of other traffic calming measures to slow down traffic such as speed humps. Based upon several comments, there is a lack of knowledge and awareness of traffic laws surrounding pedestrians and legal crosswalks; the lack of understanding traffic laws does highlight opportunities to develop educational campaigns.

### **Key Findings & Recommendations**

Key findings and recommendations are based on traffic engineering best practice, and traffic assessment and report data. Temporary traffic calming curbs have been leveraged successfully across Alberta to improve crosswalk conspicuity and reduce pedestrian exposure time through the cost-effective and flexible temporary tool.

Increased awareness for through traffic does improve pedestrian safety and provides drivers accessing and egressing the 56a Street corridor with improved visibility of pedestrians and more reaction time due to the slower approaching traffic.

From a traffic safety and engineering perspective, while perceived to be an inconvenience, temporary traffic calming curbs create a physical barrier to reduce the exposure of pedestrians within the marked or unmarked crosswalks at the intersections while also encouraging drivers to reduce their speed through the intersection. The increased visibility of the intersection for drivers and narrowed cross-section, make the crosswalks more noticeable to drivers, especially in low-light conditions or poor weather. This helps in reducing the likelihood of a pedestrian collision.

The recommendation, as provided by a traffic engineer and road safety professional, is to replace the temporary traffic calming curbs with median islands to assess an alternative intersection design option (see Figures 1 and 2).

### **2025 Improvements**

The median island option will be implemented and monitored along with capturing public input, to assess the effects and benefits on traffic and pedestrian safety for permanent implementation during future planned rehabilitation work. Additionally, the median island design is recommended to be left in-place year-round, as seen throughout multiple neighbouring municipalities. The layouts are illustrated below and maintain the previously installed rubber median and delineator post at the stop locations on 56a Street.



**Figure 1: 56a/55 Avenue**



**Figure 2: 56a/Rue Montalet**