



# Revitalize 8 Street S.W. – Phase 1, Step 2

Report Back: What we Heard

August 18, 2023

## Project overview

The City of Calgary (The City) is investing in the future of 8 Street S.W. by transforming this vital place and important community connector for Downtown West and the Beltline. As a flagship project for Calgary's [Downtown Strategy](#), this project provides a foundation for The City to collaborate with Calgarians to advance the approved [8 Street S.W. Corridor Master Plan](#) (2016) to meet the current and future needs of these thriving downtown neighbourhoods. Since 2016, much has changed, requiring updates to the approved plan:

### Societal Changes

- Increase in office vacancies
- Increased use of alternative modes of transportation
- Shift in Calgarians' priorities toward active transportation modes
- Increased bike lane infrastructure downtown
- Increased concerns around crime, public safety and social disorder
- Community needs have evolved

### Planning and Policy Changes

- Approval of [Calgary's Greater Downtown Plan](#) in 2021
- Downtown revitalization is a Council priority
- [Climate Strategy](#) is a Council priority
- [The Calgary Transportation Plan](#), including the [5A Pathway and Bikeway Network](#) was approved by Council in 2021
- Changes to best practices for bike infrastructure design

### Neighbourhood Changes

- Adjacent initiatives are underway or completed, including [Century Gardens](#), [Eau Claire Area Improvements](#), [Calgary Downtown Development Incentive Program](#) and the [Future of Stephen Avenue](#)
- New developments and businesses have been established on the corridor
- The use and volume of modes of transportation have changed
- Street conditions have changed

Building off the 2016 Master Plan, Phase 1 (conducted in early 2023) focused on advancing the conceptual design for 8 Street S.W. to consider the above changes and reflect the current and future needs of this important north-south community connection.

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## 8 Street S.W. and the Greater Downtown Plan

8 Street S.W. is guided by the Council-approved Greater Downtown Plan (GDP), which highlights it as a key capital public realm project for improving vibrancy in Calgary's downtown.

The strategic moves, outlined in the Greater Downtown Plan, that the Revitalize 8 Street S.W. Project supports include:

### Neighbourhoods for a vibrant urban life

- Create mixed-use neighbourhoods with gathering places, housing choices and all the amenities residents need close by.

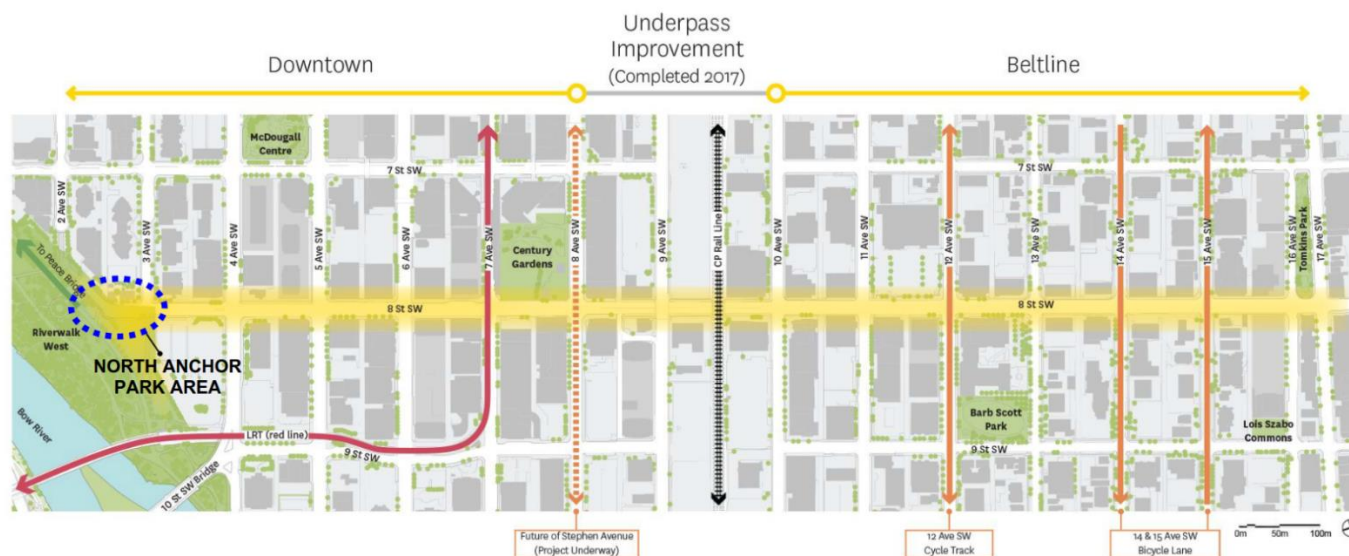
### A green network for a healthy environment

- Build a green network by connecting parks, natural spaces, and river frontage with downtown's main streets.
- 8 Street S.W. is part of downtown's green network. Streets within the green network prioritize providing opportunities for walking and wheeling and place an emphasis on pedestrian safety, quality of landscaping, recreation and the natural qualities of the street.

### Streets for people

- Design streets for walkers and wheelers first, with regional pathways stretching along riverbanks and underpasses, and bridges and on-street mobility tracks connecting to neighbouring communities.

## Study Area





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The Revitalize 8 Street S.W. Project will focus on public realm improvements north and south of the 8 Street S.W. underpass of the CP Railway. Improvements to the 8 Street S.W. underpass were completed in 2017.

### North Section - Downtown

The north section of the project is in the downtown core and extends from 8 Avenue S.W. to the Bow River. This includes the interface between where 8 Street S.W. ends at the riverfront park area on the north end, North Anchor Park.

### South Section - Beltline

The south section is in the Beltline and extends from 10 Avenue S.W. to just south of 17 Avenue S.W.

### What we have done so far – Phase 1, Step 1: Reintroduce

Phase 1 reintroduced 8 Street S.W. to the community and sought feedback on how the corridor functions today and how it could function in the future to meet the vision and guiding principles of the 8 Street S.W. Master Plan. This feedback, along with technical studies, were used to advance and refine the conceptual designs for the corridor.

### Where we are now – Phase 1, Step 2: Refine

Building off the 2016 Master Plan, we have revised the conceptual design based on our understanding of current policies and standards, best practices in street design, technical evaluation, and feedback received during public engagement in February 2023. Based on feedback from Spring 2023 engagement and further technical studies and assessments, the final conceptual design for 8 Street S.W. will be shared in Fall 2023.

The project is targeted to be construction ready in 2024.



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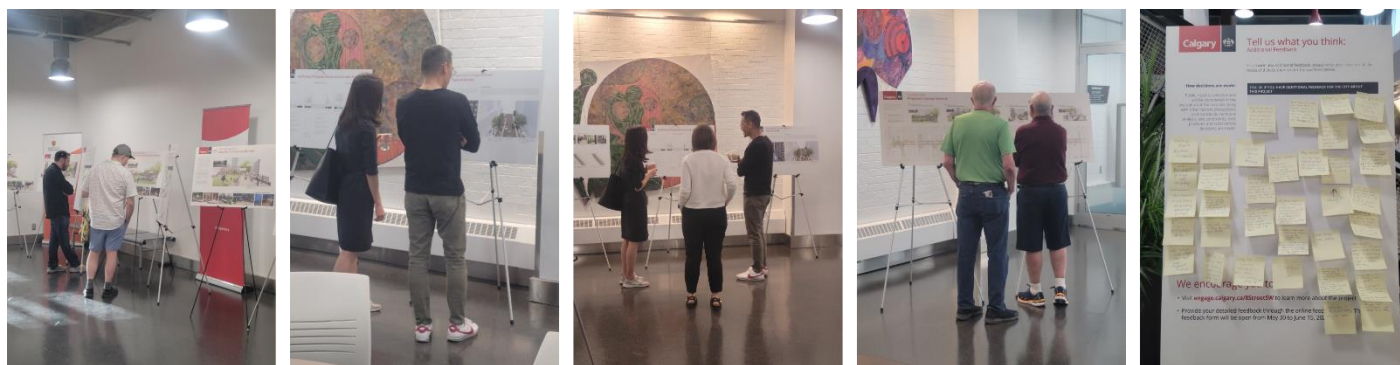
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### Engagement overview

For the Refine step, an online engagement opportunity was available May 30 – June 15, 2023 at <https://engage.calgary.ca/8streetSW>. There were 1,619 page views during this time and 321 contributions of feedback were submitted. The online engagement included a section in which participants could ask a question that was then answered by the project team.

The project team also hosted an in-person drop-in open house in the Atrium of the University of Calgary Downtown Campus located at 906 8 Ave S.W. on the evening of May 31, 2023. Approximately 80 participants attended.

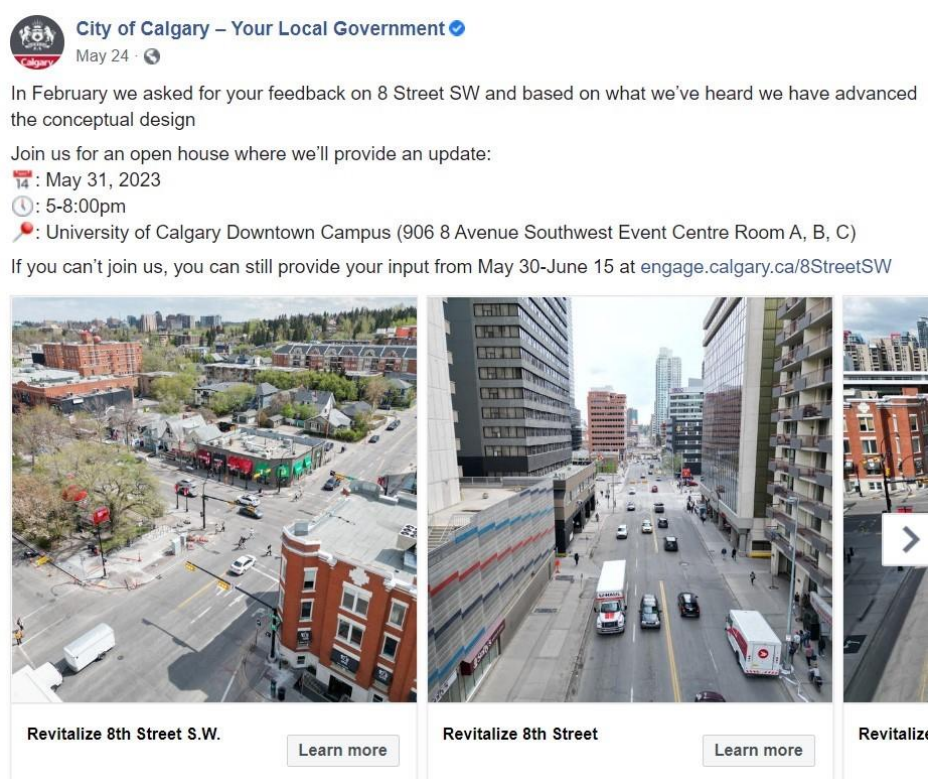


The results in this report include feedback from online participants as well as from those who provided input at the in-person open house.

## Communications overview

The following communications tactics were used to inform citizens about the Revitalize 8 Street S.W. project and engagement in Spring 2023:

- A social media campaign ran beginning May 24 and included Facebook, Twitter and NextDoor. A total of 1,073 link clicks achieved the goal of driving people to the project engage page to learn more and share their feedback. The campaign performed well with 53,916 impressions. Below is an example of a Facebook post:



- Postcards were delivered to the surrounding area and Canada Post letter carrier walk routes. This included the proximity of 8 Street S.W. between 2 Avenue S.W. and 17 Avenue S.W. Approximately 17,000 post cards were delivered by May 24.
- Two sounding boards with posters were placed on the corridor, facing 8 Street S.W.: one on the northwest corner of Century Gardens and one on the west side of Tomkins Park. The poster included information about the engagement and a QR code and link to the project's engagement page.





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### What we heard

Preceding the questions asked to gather feedback, the engagement page provided information about and images of the proposed concept designs. This was followed by request for feedback as outlined below.

#### *PROVIDE YOUR INPUT*

*Please review the information on the concept above and review and answer the related questions below.*

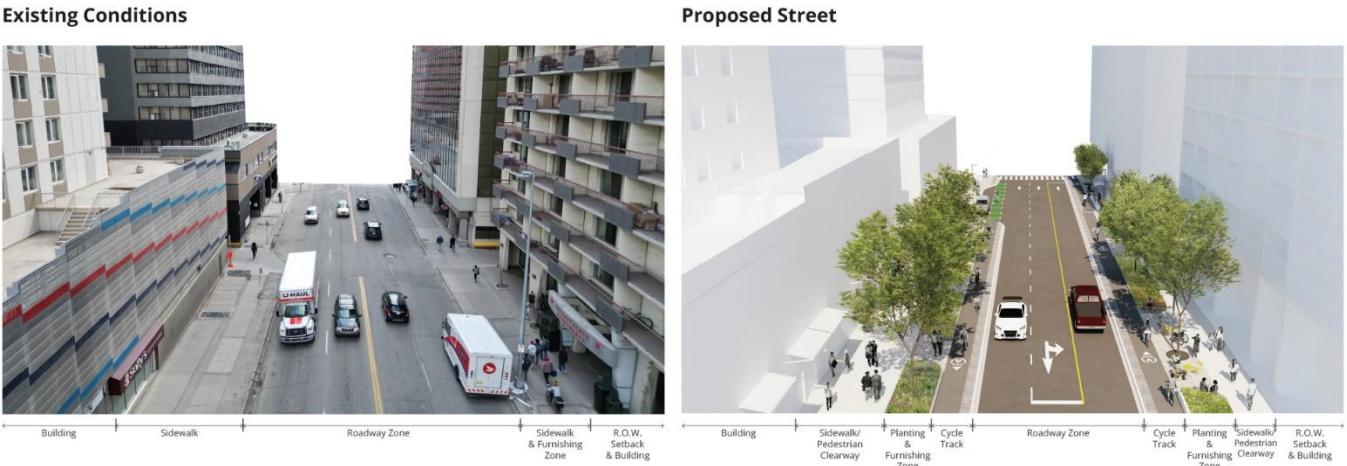
*The topics we would like your feedback on are:*

- 1. Proposed Concept Design for 8 Street S.W.*
- 2. Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to North Anchor Park*
- 3. Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to Century Gardens*
- 4. Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to Tomkins Park*
- 5. Any Additional Feedback*

The web content displayed for each question in the online engagement and the key themes of what we heard is summarized over the following pages.

This feedback, input from City advisory groups, and further technical analysis and assessments will be used to refine the conceptual design. The final conceptual design will be shared in Fall of 2023.

1. Proposed Design Concept for 8 Street S.W.



The drone photograph (above, left image) of 8 Street S.W. in downtown helps us to understand how it works and looks today. It is a street that is largely designed for vehicles, with little offered to make the environment inviting or pleasant for people. Examples of this are the lack of trees or any type of vegetation, no places to sit or rest, roadway level lights, and cycling in mixed traffic with other vehicles.

The rendering of the proposed street (above, right image) demonstrates how the design comes together to satisfy the Master Plan principles. 8 Street S.W. becomes a truly green network with protected bike and wheel facilities, generous space for planting of trees and other vegetation, places to sit and gather, and broad pedestrian clearways free of obstacles. We can provide different planting conditions to best respond to varying conditions at grade and below grade.

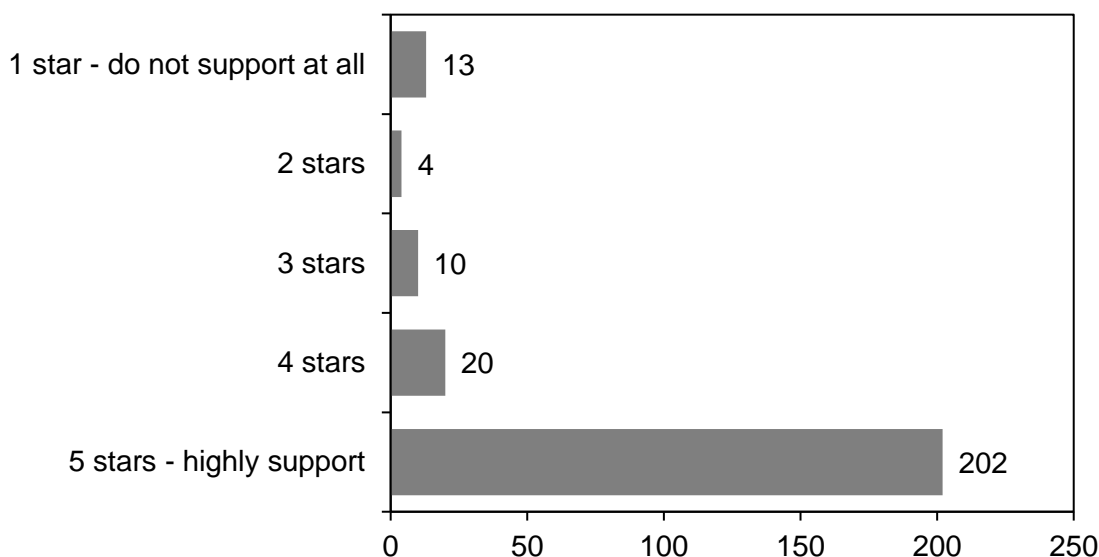
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Please rate your level of support for the proposed concept design for 8 Street S.W., where 1 star is 'do not support at all' and 5 stars is 'highly support.'

Rating of 8 Street S.W. Concept Design



Please explain why you gave that rating:

The following themes emerged in the reasons given for participants' ratings:

Themes	
General support	Many expressed general support for the concept.
Enhancements for active modes of transportation	Feedback included appreciation for the enhancements aimed at active modes of transportation, particularly cycling (separated lanes) and walking (wider sidewalks, more space, separation from cyclists) as well as separation of travel modes in general. Some mentioned the cycle lanes could be even more protected from vehicles and pedestrians.
Improved safety for walking and wheeling	Several participants like that the design improves safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
Addition of trees and other greenery	Many participants support the addition of trees and other greenery on the corridor and in the parks. A few participants indicated a need for ongoing maintenance of the greenery.





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Themes – cont'd	
Complete streets	Some acknowledged that the proposed design accommodates all modes of transportation (walking, cycling, driving and public transit).
Reduced driving lane design and traffic calming measures	There is support for the reduction of driving lanes and the addition of traffic calming measures, although the reduced driving lane design is viewed negatively by some who noted their concerns about resulting traffic flow/congestion issues.
More welcoming and pleasant	The proposed concept for the corridor is expected to make it more welcoming and inviting, drawing people to the area for more than just passing through.

Another aspect of the project is to consider the way that 8 Street S.W. relates to three main green spaces along the corridor. These three parks are North Anchor Park, Century Gardens, and Tomkins Park.

## 2. Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to North Anchor Park

North Anchor Park is located on the west side of 8 Street S.W. between the Bow River Parkway and a city owned parking lot on 4 Avenue S.W. It has views towards the Bow River and is currently an open lawn with little relationship to the street or the Parkway.

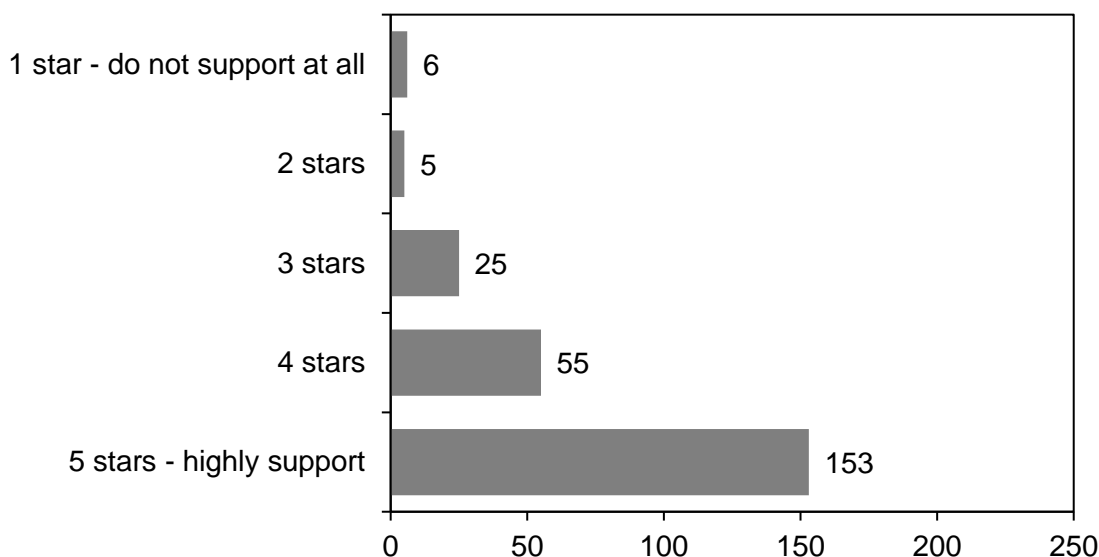
The key directions to improve this space include bringing in features to animate the park, creating a variety of playful seating options, and introducing lighting to create a special ambiance, welcoming character, and improved sense of safety.

The rendering below demonstrates how these design moves can enhance the park to become both a destination and work with 8 Street S.W. to improve the overall pedestrian experience.



Please rate your level of support for the proposed activation of the North Anchor Park edge with 8 Street S.W., where 1 star is 'do not support at all' and 5 stars is 'highly support.'

## Rating of Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to North Anchor Park



### Please explain why you gave that rating:

The following themes emerged in the reasons given for participants' ratings:

Themes	
General support	Many expressed general support for the concept.
More activation/ programming	Participants noted opportunities for more/better activation and programming in the space (e.g., playground, public art, area for performances, food services, areas for sports), with some mentioning it is not a significant improvement on the current park.
Addition of trees and other greenery	Participants support the addition of trees and other greenery in this park, although some think even more is needed, with a few participants suggesting there isn't enough shade provided in the proposed concept.
More welcoming and pleasant	The proposed concept for the park is expected to make it more welcoming and inviting, drawing people to the area.

## 3. Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to Century Gardens

Century Gardens is located on the east side of 8 Street S.W. between the 7 Avenue S.W. transit corridor and 8 Avenue S.W. (Stephen Avenue S.W.). It is largely a City park, however the northwest portion is a privately owned parcel - currently being used as a parking lot - that The City is temporarily leasing as park space until the property owner wishes to redevelop.

The critical design challenge is how to re-engage the park with the street. The key design directions include removing the parking lot, extending the park to the street, and expanding the sense of public space at this important moment along the corridor.

The rendering demonstrates how these design moves could change the overall experience for those moving along 8 Street S.W., waiting for transit, or enjoying the park.



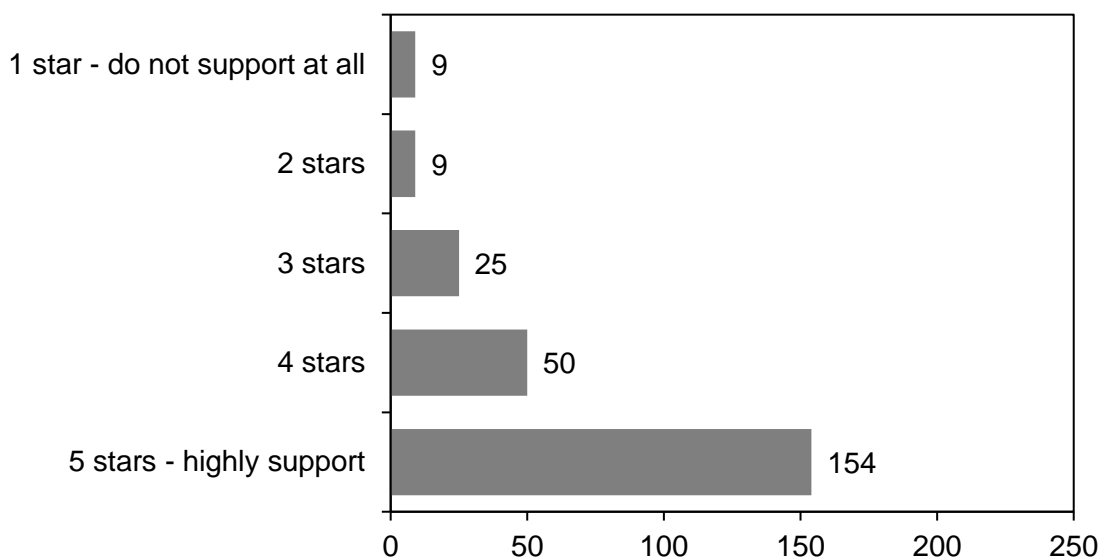
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Please rate your level of support for the proposed activation of the Century Gardens edge with 8 Street S.W., where 1 star is 'do not support at all' and 5 stars is 'highly support.'

### Rating of Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to Century Gardens



### Please explain why you gave that rating:

The following themes emerged in the reasons given for participants' ratings:

Themes	
General support	Many expressed general support for the concept.
Basketball court	Participants generally support the addition of a basketball court, although some noted concerns about it (e.g., won't be used, needs to be enclosed to prevent stray balls).
More activation/programming	While some appreciate the activation of the space, participants noted opportunities for more/better activation and programming in the space (more recreation/sports opportunities, playground, performance stage, food services/small retail shops).

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Themes – cont'd	
More welcoming and pleasant	The proposed concept for the park, including the interface with 8 Street S.W., is expected to make it more welcoming and inviting, drawing people to the park.
Enhancements for active modes of transportation	Some participants noted the proposed design support active modes such as walking and cycling.
Safety	Some participants are concerned about crime, drug use and transient people in and around the park. A few participants mentioned better lighting and clear sight lines would be welcomed.
Bus stop	There is concern about potential safety issues with the design of the bus stop vis-à-vis the cycle lane, whereby the cycle lane passes in front of the bus stop; however, a few participants like this design.
Parking lot	Some participants noted that the conversion of the parking lot to park space is welcome.



## 4. Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to Tomkins Park

Tomkins Park is located on the east side of 8 Street S.W. between 16 and 17 Avenue S.W. This rectangular park space is a popular destination for activities, gathering, and people watching. Currently, the western edge of the park along 8 Street S.W. is congested with several elements and challenging to navigate. The relationship of 16 Avenue S.W. to the park is also lacking and does not capitalize on its unique setting.

The key directions to improve the relationship of Tomkins Park are to reanimate the edges, reorganize existing elements so they are less obtrusive, and consider how the park and 16 Avenue S.W. work together as part of the same enhanced experience.

The rendering demonstrates how these design moves can expand the space in front of the park to create a larger plaza, give priority to pedestrians and cyclists across the 16 Avenue S.W. intersection, and introduce welcome greening.



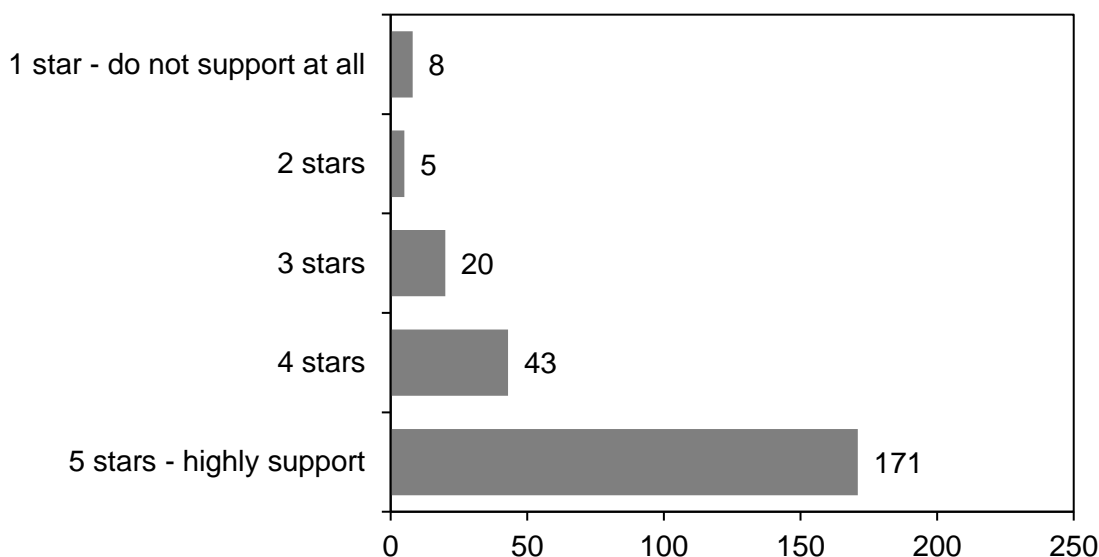
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Please rate your level of support for the proposed activation of the Tomkins Park edge with 8 Street S.W., where 1 star is 'do not support at all' and 5 stars is 'highly support.'

### Rating of Proposed Ideas for Spaces Next to Tomkins Park



### Please explain why you gave that rating:

The following themes emerged in the reasons given for participants' rating:

Themes	
General support	Many expressed general support for the concept.
Enhancements for active modes of transportation	Feedback included appreciation for the enhancements aimed at active modes of transportation and improved safety, particularly the raised cycle path and sidewalk and the road sloped to these raised surfaces. There is some concern about safety issues related to potential conflicts of modes of transportation and the suggestion that cycle lanes should be better protected from traffic and pedestrians and cyclists better protected from each other.
16 Avenue S.W.	Despite the traffic calming measures that would benefit pedestrians on 16 Avenue S.W., some think this block of the road should be closed to vehicles, making it pedestrian-only and possibly extending the park.



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Themes – cont'd	
More activation/ programming	Some participants expressed interest in more activation of, and programming in, the park overall.
More welcoming and pleasant	The proposed concept for park is expected to make it more welcoming and inviting, drawing people to the park.
Addition of trees and other greenery	Participants support the addition of trees and other greenery proposed for this park, although some think even more is needed.
Improved connectivity	There is appreciation for the improved connectivity the proposed concept will bring to this area.

## 5. If you have additional feedback for The City about the 8 Street S.W. project, please share it:

The following themes emerged in additional feedback provided by participants:

Themes	
General support	Many expressed general support for the concept (no specific details about features, etc.) and some noted they would like to see the concepts come to fruition as soon as possible.
Enhancements for active modes of transportation	Feedback included appreciation for the enhancements aimed at active modes of transportation and improved safety, particularly the cycling lanes, although there is still some concern about safety issues regarding conflicts of modes of transportation (cyclists not being protected enough from vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists not protected enough from one another).
Addition of trees and other greenery	Many participants support the addition of trees and other greenery on this corridor and in the parks.
Improved connectivity	Participants generally like that the proposed concept improves connectivity along the corridor and/or with areas north and south of it; however, some are concerned about potential traffic flow/congestion issues.
Safety	Some participants are concerned about crime, drug use and transient people, especially around the parks and underpass.
Activation/features	Some participants provided suggestions for additional features and activations of the area, including live entertainment, food services, public art, enhanced lighting, mixed use development.

## Summary

Overall, participants are supportive of the proposed concept design for 8 Street S.W. as well as of the edge activations with North Anchor Park, Century Gardens and Tomkins Park. Feedback included appreciation for the enhancements for active modes of transportation and the improved safety of cyclists and pedestrians. It also included mentions that the overall proposed concept design for 8 Street S.W. and the concept designs for the parks will result in the corridor and parks being more inviting and pleasant areas in which to spend time. Participants had suggestions for activations and features they would like to see in the parks and/or along the corridor.



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### Next steps

Following refinement of the draft conceptual design based on feedback from the Refine step of engagement and further technical studies and assessments, the final conceptual design for 8 Street S.W. will be shared in Fall 2023.

### Verbatim comments

Verbatim comments include all feedback collected via the online and in-person engagement. All input has been reviewed and provided to the project team to be considered in decision making for the project. Verbatim responses are in unedited format (no changes to spelling or grammar) unless there is offensive language or inappropriate commentary, in alignment with The City of Calgary's Respectful Workplace Policy, or personal information. No other edits to the feedback have been made, and the verbatim comments are as received. As a result, some of the content in this verbatim record may still be considered offensive or distasteful to some readers. To view all verbatim responses please click [here](#).