

GAETZ AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT STUDY

FINAL REPORT



Prepared for:

The City of Red Deer

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**Attention: Mr. Tom Warder, P.Eng.
Engineering Services Manager**

Dear Sir:

Reference: Gaetz Avenue Redevelopment Study

Stantec Consulting Ltd. is pleased to submit 15 copies of the Final Report of the Gaetz Avenue Redevelopment Study.

The Redevelopment Study is intended to serve as a long term (115,000 population) planning guideline to outline the requirements for widening of Gaetz Avenue and the associated improvements to intersections, service road configurations, business accesses, walkways, bicycle paths, building setbacks and landscape requirements. The plan is flexible, demonstrating how various tools can be applied to develop alternative solutions to accommodate future development changes. The improvements will be driven by the requirements for the widening of Gaetz Avenue, intersection capacity/safety improvements, or redevelopment of private property.

Stantec would like to acknowledge the efforts of Frank Colosimo, the City Project Manager and the Steering Committee for their ongoing involvement and cooperation throughout this comprehensive and complex study. We look forward to further working with the City of Red Deer in the implementation of this plan.

Should you have any questions or require further explanation regarding the content of this report we would be pleased to respond.

Sincerely,

STANTEC CONSULTING LTD.

Russ Wlad, P.Eng.
Managing Principal, Red Deer

Attachments

Executive Summary

In recent years the City of Red Deer has been approached by a number of businesses along Gaetz Avenue regarding the purchase of service roads fronting their properties for redevelopment and inclusion into their lands. In many instances the City has agreed to sell land where the service roads were determined not to be required. With increasing growth, City Council has decided to establish an overall plan to serve as a guideline to assist in making future decisions for the redevelopment of lands along Gaetz Avenue. The limits of the study area are along Gaetz Avenue from Highway 11A to 68 Street on the north and from 37 Street to 19 Street (Delburne road) on the south.

Some of the objectives of the Redevelopment Study included requirements for the widening of Gaetz Avenue to six lanes, improving the operational efficiency and safety of intersections, providing well defined pedestrian and bicycle paths and crossings, developing right-of-way requirements with associated building and signage setback requirements, and incorporating an aesthetically pleasing landscaping concept. The main components of the Redevelopment Study include public consultation, development of design criteria (planning tools), traffic analysis, safety review, landscaping, access management, and requirements of the land use bylaws regarding building and signage setbacks.

The 2004 Red Deer Transportation Plan determined that the Gaetz Avenue corridor would require widening from four to six lanes. The plan includes the following components and timelines:

- Widening of Gaetz Avenue North from 71 Street to 77 Street within the next 5 years along with intersection improvements at Highway 11A, 78A Street, 78 Street, and 80 Street.
- Improvement of the 32 Street and 19 Street Gaetz Avenue South intersections in the next 5 years
- Widening of Gaetz Avenue South from 19 Street to 34 Street in the 6 to 10 year period.
- Widening of Gaetz Avenue North from 77 Street to Highway 11A in the 6 to 10 year period.
- Widening of Gaetz Avenue South from 34 Street to the 37 Street would occur beyond the 115,000 population - 15 to 20 years.

A traffic analysis was conducted to provide a basis for functional design of the service roads and cross street intersections. The analysis supported the recommendation for the use of varying sized bulbing at service roads. The reconfiguration of service road intersections in combination with lane widening was used to increase the overall level of service of Gaetz Avenue. Through

traffic analysis it was determined that in order to maintain an acceptable level of service and safety at intersection locations along Gaetz Avenue service road modifications and bulbing would be required for the 115,000 population horizon.

Due to the nature of the study, a significant component of the Gaetz Avenue Redevelopment Study involved consultation with business stakeholders along the Gaetz Avenue corridor. The purpose, objectives, and content of the Redevelopment Study were presented to the stakeholders through a series of individual and group meetings as well as at public open houses. General comments forwarded by the public include current level of service, reconfiguration of existing accesses, shared access, landscaping, parking, and visibility of business frontage. The majority of the concerns expressed by business and property owners have been addressed in the content of the Redevelopment Study. There are a few instances where a compromise could not be reached due to traffic safety or operational issues and the inability to meet the requirements of sound transportation design. Changes to access or in some cases the loss of a turning movement into a property was the greatest concern to businesses. Where roadway geometrics permitted, slotted left turns were provided to improve or maintain existing conditions. Right-in/right-out accesses have been provided in the middle of some blocks granting direct access to a particular property. Where the option to remove a service road was not generally accepted within a particular block, the service road is shown to remain in place. At some locations the proposed improvements would significantly affect the existing property or business development. In these instances the implementation of the plan would coincide with redevelopment plans of the property and business owner.

Respondents who attended the public open houses commonly expressed the need for visibility of their businesses and signage. The main concern was the type and density of the landscaping within the boulevard space. In order to address this issue the landscape plan identifies new tree planting at similar spacing as is currently found along Gaetz Avenue. There will also be an improvement in the tree species planted. Larger evergreens and poplar trees that block visibility, would be replaced with smaller deciduous canopy and ornamental trees. Groupings of small ornamental trees in the center boulevard will provide a more substantial appearance to the landscaping. Openings between the tree groupings will provide good visibility to business frontage along the corridor.

The Redevelopment Plan is intended to serve as a long-term (115,000 population) planning guideline to outline the requirements for widening of Gaetz Avenue and the associated improvements to intersections, service road configurations, business accesses, walkways, bicycle paths, building set backs, and landscape requirements. The plan demonstrates how various tools can be applied in site-specific situations. Over time the plan may be modified using these tools to provide alternate solutions in order to accommodate development changes that have occurred within the area. The improvement will be driven by the requirement for widening of Gaetz Avenue, intersection capacity improvements, or redevelopment of private property. Figures 8.1 to 8.8 outline the developed solutions for the improvements associated with the redevelopment of Gaetz Avenue.

The following recommendations outline the means by which the City can implement the information presented in this report.

- To provide adequate levels of service and increase the overall safety and efficiency of the Gaetz Avenue corridor to the 115,000 population the City should use the Redevelopment Plan and associated planning tool as a guideline for development of acceptable solutions as redevelopment occurs.
- To increase roadway capacity, improve operational efficiency, traffic safety and provide adequate spacing between signalized intersections, the signals at 78 Street should be removed and relocated to 78A Street. In order to accommodate existing businesses accessed at 78 Street, a northbound and southbound protected left turn lane on Gaetz Avenue could be provided. Signals should also be installed at 80 Street.
- The City should maintain the existing Land-Use-Bylaw building set back criteria of 15 meters for C4 zoning and 9 meters for C2 zoning. Where future property lines are adjusted, the current bylaw would apply. The building setback distance where service road bulbing is installed should be reduced to 6 meters from the property line.
- Prior to implementation of any recommended improvements that affect private property or access, further stakeholder consultation should be completed. This is of particular concern where elimination of service roads may require joint access agreements. In these situations, the City should be an active participant and ensure the agreements are in place prior to implementing any changes.
- Landowners should be afforded the opportunity to purchase surplus land through removal of the service roads. Land would be offered at the then appraised market value.
- The City should consider the relaxation of the frontage landscaping and parking requirements for C2 and C4 zoning where businesses are impacted by service road bulbing. Additional landscaping could be provided within the service road bulb area of the boulevard to compensate for the reduction of on site landscaping.
- Where locations of existing businesses or properties do not allow the desired improvements to occur, the City should consider a staged approach to development. This report outlines the various methods of staging that could occur.
- The two most favorable options for the upgrade of the Gaetz Avenue and 32 Street intersection are Option 4, the one-way couplet, and Option 5, widening the existing intersection. Option 4 is superior in terms of overall roadway capacity, level of service and pedestrian safety. Option 5, widening of the existing intersection, is more favorable from the business owners' point of view for access and building frontage. Option 5 will meet the traffic capacity requirements; however, there is some concern regarding the level of service as the city population reaches 115, 000. It is understood that there will be wait times greater than the currently accepted city standard for a few of the turning movements at this intersection. Improvements to the 32 Street intersection will be required in the relatively short term. The implementation of Option 4 would have a significant impact on the adjacent businesses without major redevelopment on each of the corner properties. Based on discussion with the business owners it is not very likely

that such redevelopment would occur within the short term. Considering these known conditions, Option 5 has been recommended and shown on the final plan.

- A 1.5 meter wide walkway will be located where service roads remain in place and a 3.0 meter wide walkway will be located where service roads are removed. A bicycle route has been designated along the west side of Gaetz Avenue where it will utilize the 3.0 meter wide walkway, except for service road locations where the bicycle route will make use of the service road. The alignment of the walkways may be straight with a consistent offset from the road or slightly undulating to enhance the aesthetic appearance. Figures 8.1 to 8.8 show the landscape concept plan for the corridor. In addition to this, Figure 8.9 shows a rendering of the landscape cross section on a typical section of Gaetz Avenue. Finally, in Figure 8.10 shows the position of the plantings and street furniture in relation to other cross section elements.
- The City adopt a common landscape theme along Gaetz Avenue as identified in Section 8 of this report to identify the roadway as a city entrance corridor and enhance the overall esthetics of the corridor without jeopardizing safety or viability for business owners.
- Street furnishings along the corridor should be consistent and may include benches, trash receptacles, bus shelters, bollards, signage, and signal lights to complement the streetlight standards. Streetlight standards will consist of 45' standard poles painted black with a flat glass fixture to minimize light pollution and will be located on both sides of the roadway. Where service roads are retained, the dual headed fixture light standard will be used. Architectural metal banner plates would also be incorporated to identify Gaetz Avenue as a unique corridor.

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