

What We Learned - Engagement Summary



51st Street and Millar Avenue Intersection Improvement Round 2 Summary

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April 14, 2025



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The City of Saskatoon reviewed the intersection of 51st Street East and Millar Avenue to identify a permanent design that addresses the safety and operational issues that exist at this [intersection](#) (see Appendix A for map). The review of the intersection identified the following problems:

- Safety concerns at the driveways north and south of the intersection,
- Poor level of service during peak hours,
- Does not meet accessibility standards,
- Delays due to train crossings on 51st Street, east of the intersection, and
- Challenges for westbound large vehicles making a right turn northbound.

Three different options were proposed to address these issues,

1. [Improve Accessibility](#) (Option A)
2. [Relocate Driveways](#) (Option B)
3. [Complete Reconstruction](#) (Option C)

After reviewing the options, [Option C – Complete Reconstruction](#) was chosen because it addresses the safety and operational issues at the intersection. The first round of engagement saw 20% (14 out of 70 respondents) participant support for this option. Option C consists of:

- Changes to the northbound and southbound lane
 - Left turn bay, through lane and a shared through/right turn lane
- Addition of a median island in the north and south leg
- Improved accessibility at all channelized islands
- Improved truck turning at the intersection

Summary of Engagement Activities for 51st Street and Millar Avenue

The goal of this engagement was to **Inform and ask** for feedback on the preferred option from the public, and businesses and property owners directly adjacent to the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection. For a summary of the engagement strategy for the project see *Table 1*.

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Table 1: Summary of Engagement Strategy

Engagement Event	Engagement Purpose	Participants	Engagement Goal
Virtual/ In person meetings with Stakeholders	Communicate options and gather feedback	Businesses and property owners directly adjacent to the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection.	Ask, share the roll plan and gather feedback from stakeholders for the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection improvement.
Open House	Share information on options and gather feedback	Businesses and property owners directly adjacent to the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection. General public	Ask, share the roll plan and gather feedback on the recommended option on the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection improvement.
Online Survey	Share information on options and gather feedback	Businesses and property owners directly adjacent to the 51st Street and Millar Avenue General public	Ask, share the roll plan and gather feedback on the recommended option on the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection improvement.
Engage page	Share information on the preferred option and provide ways to provide feedback	Businesses and property owners directly adjacent to the 51st Street and Millar Avenue General public	Provide information about the project background, project related documents and how participants can provide feedback.

Stakeholder meetings

There are 41 businesses and property owners directly adjacent to the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection. Letters and emails were sent out to these businesses and property owners to inform them of the project and to provide them the opportunity to meet with City staff to provide their feedback. Some businesses opted to fill out the survey rather than meet with City staff.

Six businesses and property owners requested to meet with the project team; however, one business was unable to meet. For this business alternative method of engagement was provided – e.g., email/phone call, filling out the survey or coming to the open house event. The remaining five meetings were either in person or virtually. Minutes were taken during the meetings to ensure questions and concerns from the business were documented. The meeting minutes were shared with the business and property owners. One business asked for a summary of the recommended option so they can provide feedback after meeting with their team. Their feedback has not yet been received. The following summary is based on the response of four business and property owners.

What We Learned from Stakeholder Meetings

The main concerns raised by the business and property owners was regarding the impact of the construction project on access to properties. The median extension location and land acquisition for accessibility was another point of discussion with the property owners. One property owner

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expressed worries about the impact on green space in front of their property and the potential for extra green space being required on properties after the completion of the project.

One property owner raised concerns about not having their voice heard, as they did not want Option C. They also had concerns about the median cut-off point in the recommended option because their tenants will not be happy with it.

Another property owner raised their concerns about the loss of parking spaces, and the need for the relocation of their pylon sign on their property. They also wanted clarity on the compensation for land appropriation.

The timing of the project going to Council and the construction start date were raised by all the business and property owners, they wanted to have a sense of when the project implementation will affect their business or property, along with the impacts on their respective properties.

Open House

The open house event was hosted along with the Connecting Millar Avenue project on February 11, 2025, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at the Rusty Macdonald Library. The engagement activity was promoted through the Connecting Millar Avenue project's [Engage Page](#), the City's social media pages, flyers distributed to all the businesses and property owners along Millar Avenue, and letters and emails sent to all the business and property owners adjacent to the intersection of 51st Street East and Millar Avenue. There were 33 attendees. At the open house, there were display boards visualizing the recommended option. The project team was available to answer questions. 12 attendees filled out the event evaluation forms and 10 of them left comments on the form. Three attendees said they will mail their response to the project team.

What We Learned from the Open House

Comments to the project team

Attendees asked questions about how the preferred option will accommodate their use of Millar Avenue as a wide load route and expressed worries about the lack of access into McDonald's for passenger cars coming from the east, particularly from residential neighborhoods. There were also concerns about how tractor trailers would access the Co-Op card lock from the north. Attendees were content to hear that the turning movement for large trucks westbound turning north would be improved, as well as overall operations. However, maintaining business access during construction remained a significant concern.

Event Evaluation Form

Three of the attendees that filled out the evaluation form indicated their support for the recommended option, another three left comments about how good the event was for them. Two attendees wrote that they do not think their comments will be taken into consideration. One attendee wrote that the project should have one more information session because they did not get any notification of the engagement event.

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Five of the attendees heard about the engagement session from a friend or colleague, one of the attendees heard about the event from their tenants. Two attendees received a flyer delivered to their home. Two heard about the event from the City's social media posts and another two knew about the event from the city website and email respectively.

Ten attendees indicated that the event was good, they received the information needed and were able to provide their feedback. Two were satisfied with the information presented.

Online Survey

One question for the 51st Street and Millar Avenue intersection improvements was added to the Connecting Millar Avenue online survey. The survey ran from January 25 to February 25, 2025, a link to the online survey was on the project's [Engage Page](#) and promoted on the City's social media pages. The question read:

"Please share with the project team what you like and what can be improved upon with the preferred design for the 51st Street and Millar Avenue Intersection Improvement. Please be specific in your response."

What We Learned from the Online Survey

There were 130 responses to the question, below are some of the common themes heard.

Support for the preferred option

The survey had 38% (or 50 respondents) people providing clear support for the preferred design.

- "I like Option C, since it is the best and safest for AT-traffic [Active Transportation] along Millar."
- "If you are going to do a reconstruction, do it fully. The design option for full reconstruction makes sense and would work to make the intersection safer and smoother movement of traffic."
- "Full reconstruction is the best and only solution to solve all the issues and concerns. Do it once and do it right."
- "Will be a much improved and safer intersection once improvements are complete"
- "Looks like this design will help with operational problems."
- "Sounds good if it improves the movement of traffic. Right now this is a terrible intersection. Good idea to fix the entries to Tim Hortons and blind spots while entering traffic. Option C sounds great!"
- "The median is a good idea and important..."
- "Great - this intersection needs improvement. The left southbound left-turning/through lane is always backed up at the end of the day."

Some of the respondents indicated that preferred option would solve the concerns at the intersection.

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Opposition to the proposed option

The survey had about 13% (or 17 respondents) people clearly opposed to the preferred design. Some comments included below:

- “The addition of a median on the north and south leg will create further traffic problems.”
- “Poor use of funding for something that works just fine as it is and for which traffic will reduce when new perimeter highway is completed”
- “Nothing looks good”
- “We can't afford this.”
- “It seems to work well as is. If this design is so much better why wasn't it designed like this in the beginning? Seems like a big waste to re-engineer an intersection.”

Comments on Traffic congestion and Safety

- “We need the right hand turning lane extended toward 50th Street to the railway tracks. This will allow vehicles to pile up in the straight through lane. “
- “Depending on how long the bay is, traffic will still backup during peak. But no worse than it is now. “
- “...I think they also need to consider increasing the length of the left turn light during peak hours focusing on the direction of traffic during those times (e.g., increase length of left turn lane in morning going north bound and opposite in evening”
- “I'm not an expert, but as long as this does something to make the traffic flow smoother at rush hour when you are coming from Millar heading SB [South Bound] and turning left onto 51st EB [East Bound]. This is one of the worst choke points in the city and it gets backed up for blocks during rush hour.”
- “The crosswalks need to be bold, not just the standard 2 white lines. I would recommend green coloured concrete in the pedestrian area throughout the intersection.”
- “I feel that to ensure the safety of pedestrians/cyclists crossing the slip lanes, there should be signals that can be activated by pedestrians/cyclists to stop vehicular traffic from passing though these spots, in addition to the intersection crossing signals.”
- “Really need traffic calming on right turns especially to protect users in the crosswalk...to really slow the turning speed. Need the pedestrian activated light switch to work faster - this is a long light to wait for if its winter or raining etc.”
- “Signage and road markings to alert drivers of the presence of foot and cycle traffic.”

The traffic signal timing during peak hours was a concern that some respondents raised.

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Concerns about Snow Clearing

- “The addition of a median on the north and south leg will create further traffic problems. A major concern is the lack of sufficient snow removal in the winter on Millar Avenue. Traffic is frequently reduced to 1 1/2 lanes and to pass a vehicle in the outer lane requires traffic to move across the median. This plan will only make traffic worse not better especially in the winter.”
- “The medians get piled with snow [on] Warman Road... Making it difficult to turn left...Good design but the city cannot maintain street maintenance.”
- “A major concern is the lack of sufficient snow removal in the winter on Millar Avenue”

Access to Businesses

- “Making sure that we can still access into our rental space parking lot, for our 110 dancers, safely & in a timely manner.”
- “The installation of medians will limit access to businesses near the intersection by eliminating left turn options...”
- “[Having] business access during construction”
- “...I hope something can be done regarding the parking lot entrances to businesses at this intersection as vehicles wanting to turn left into them through traffic is a major hazard and issue for traffic flow in the left lane each way.”

Limitations

The number of attendees at the open house and the amount of survey respondents may not represent the views of the people that use the intersection. Some respondents gave their contribution based on their understanding of the Connecting Millar Avenue project skewing the responses received, feedback collected from the survey and open house event may not accurately reflect the project's true scope. Some participants may have limited access to internet or technology that presented challenges in accessing the online survey. Other participants may not have a clear understanding of the preferred design.

Next Steps

Engagement results will be shared with the project team in the Transportation Department to inform next steps. The engagement summary will be appended to the Administration report for the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation (SPCT).

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Appendix A: Project Map

Figure 1: Map of project scope

