

ST. ALBERT TRAIL BARRIER WALL – STURGEON HEIGHTS

Frequently Asked Questions

September 26, 2018

What is the St. Albert Trail barrier wall?

The City of St. Albert constructed a precast concrete wall along St. Albert Trail between 1983 and 1992 to reduce noise and create a visual barrier between residents and St. Albert Trail. The barrier wall has two sections: a southern section extending from Hebert Road to Sturgeon Road along the east side of St. Albert Trail and a northern section extending from Giroux Road to Villeneuve Road along the west side of St. Albert Trail.

Why is the St. Albert Trail barrier wall being replaced?

The barrier wall is nearing the end of its lifespan and its condition is regularly monitored. In 2010, a scheduled evaluation and condition assessment completed by a third-party engineering consultant identified deterioration and structural issues with the barrier wall. It was recommended that the barrier wall be completely replaced by 2020.

In 2012, the City improved the safety of weak areas by removing top sections of the barrier wall in the Sturgeon Heights and Braeside neighbourhoods. The impact of removing these top sections is an increase in noise levels as sound travels more easily to the properties immediately adjacent to the wall.

How is sound measured?

Sound is measured in decibels (dBA). The higher the dBA level recorded; the more intense or loud the sound is. Sound monitors (microphones) were placed in strategic areas along St. Albert Trail, in front of and behind the barrier wall, to record sound levels. The sound monitoring measured dBAs for approximately 48 hours and was completed during September 2017. Results of this study will be provided at the October 2018 public information session.

Common industry practices limit the average 24-hour sound level to a maximum of 65 dBA, which is approximately the level of a restaurant conversation or listening to background music.

Is the whole wall being replaced?

Yes. The City has identified that the safest and most cost-effective way to respond to the current deterioration of the barrier wall is to completely reconstruct it. This will allow engineers and designers to construct a wall that is continuous, stable, aesthetically

pleasing, manages current and future sound levels and continues to provide a visual barrier.

What will the new wall look like?

The barrier wall in Sturgeon Heights will use the same material and colour as the newly constructed barrier wall in Deer Ridge (west side of St. Albert Trail between Giroux Road and Villeneuve Road), but will have unique design characteristics (i.e. panel widths and heights).

Who will choose the design of the new wall?

The final design was selected and approved by the City Engineer in 2017 and was influenced by many factors including data from the geotechnical investigations, sound levels, existing infrastructure, cost, City standards and type of material. The new wall has two different textures (public side vs. private side) with a washed suede base coat and a natural walnut colour finish covered by an anti-graffiti application.

How tall will the wall be?

The height of the wall has not yet been determined for Sturgeon Heights; however, it will most likely adopt the same height as originally designed. The goal of the new barrier wall is to provide an effective sound barrier that maintains current and future modeled noise levels below an average 24-hour limit of 65 dBA.

How long will design and construction take?

The project began in the summer of 2017 and is expected to be completed by 2020. It will be conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1 – Sturgeon Heights - Evaluation
 - Data collection was completed in October 2017 and included geotechnical investigations, measuring current sound levels and collecting existing infrastructure information.
- Phase 2 – Sturgeon Heights - Design/Engineering
 - Work is underway in Sturgeon Heights. During this phase, the City will talk with residents who have property immediately adjacent to the barrier wall. A public information session scheduled for Thursday, October 4, 2018.
- Phase 3 – Sturgeon Heights Construction
 - Construction will be divided into subsequent sections to minimize the impact as much as possible to residents, and to build the barrier wall as quickly and safely as possible. Construction dates for Sturgeon Heights have not been finalized and will be dependent on findings from previous phases. The current timeline considers construction for the southern wall section between Hebert Road to Sterling Street to be complete by the end of 2019.

The City is constructing the barrier wall in Deer Ridge in 2018 and anticipates construction taking place in Braeside between Sterling Street to Sturgeon Road in 2020.

Will the existing wall be taken down before the new wall is constructed?

Yes. The project will be divided into sections to minimize the amount of time between removing the existing wall and constructing the new wall. This plan is to reduce the impact as much as possible to residents and to build the new barrier wall as quickly and as safely as possible; however, the details of construction staging will be determined based on the methodology of installation.

As the old wall is removed, temporary privacy fencing delineating the construction zone will be placed on the homeowner's property to keep people and animals safe. Only authorized personnel will be allowed in this work zone. Residents will be asked to keep pets and children away from the work zone. The temporary construction fence will not be as sturdy as the existing barrier wall. Pets may need to be kept on leashes to prevent them from escaping.

Why was infrastructure information collected near the barrier wall?

An understanding of the existing infrastructure surrounding the existing barrier wall will have an impact on the design and construction of the new barrier wall; therefore, it was important to collect data on underground utilities, trees (including tree canopies), infrastructure (sheds, gardens, etc.) and private property lines.

How are residents in Sturgeon Heights being informed about this project?

The City is committed to maintaining communication with residents throughout the project. Communication will include meetings with residents, letters, City website updates and public information sessions. Residents directly affected by the barrier wall replacement will have additional communications provided to them including one-on-one meetings where applicable.

A public information session for Sturgeon Heights (and Braeside) is scheduled for:

Thursday, October 4, 2018
6 to 8 p.m. | Presentation at 6:15 p.m.
Vital Grandin Catholic School
39 Sunset Boulevard, St. Albert

Subject matter experts will be on hand to answer questions regarding the noise levels measured, alignment of the Sturgeon Heights and Braeside barrier wall, impacts to homeowners and general construction timelines.

If you are unable to attend the public information session, you can schedule a one-on-one session with the City of St. Albert. Please call the Construction Help Desk at 780-459-1762 or email: barrierwall@stalbert.ca. The Construction Help Desk is open

Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Inquiries will be answered within two business days.

Will there be any agreements needed by the City for work in Sturgeon Heights?

To facilitate inspection of the barrier wall and to accommodate any required maintenance of the new wall, the City will require a Utility Right-of-Way agreement to be registered on the homeowners' property. This agreement will allow an inspector to examine the wall when required and provides access from your backyard.

Homeowners will typically be notified when access is required. The agreement will also allow the City adequate room to work, in the case that the wall must be repaired. An additional temporary workspace agreement may be required to provide adequate workspace during construction. The City will directly contact homeowners for these agreements in 2018, as required.

What is a Utility Right of Way?

The Utility Right-of-Way (URW) is a defined area where the City locates services such as underground gas, water, wastewater and storm water lines. The area can also be used to accommodate berms and barriers. The URW includes a specified distance adjacent to the utility that allows room for maintenance or future improvements, if required. The homeowner owns the land where the URW is defined; however, the City acts as the main interest holder for the URW. The new barrier wall is considered a utility; therefore, a URW agreement must be registered on the affected land parcels. Click on [Utility Right-of-Ways](#) for more information.

Where is my backyard property line?

As each property is unique, homeowners can retrieve information pertaining to their property boundaries from a Real Property Report (RPR), which is a legal document prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor.

The existing barrier wall in Braeside was built on the City Public Utility Lot.

Click on [Real Property Reports](#) for more information.

Do I have a Utility Right of Way by my property?

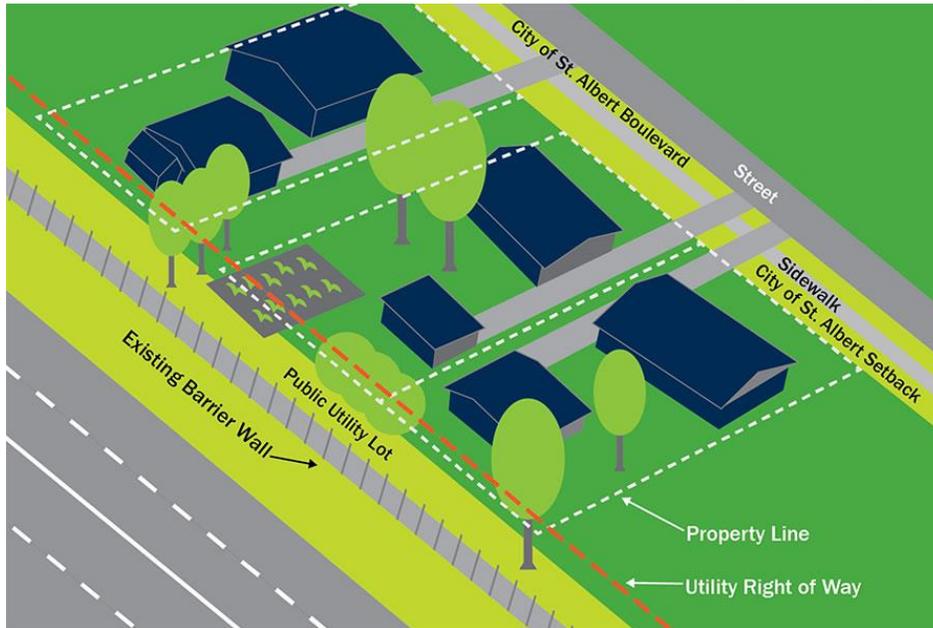
Every property is unique. Your Real Property Report will provide this information. Alternatively, individual one-on-one sessions between the City and the homeowner who resides adjacent to the wall will be scheduled in 2018 and will provide more information.

What is an encroachment? What is an encroachment agreement?

An encroachment is when a homeowner adds a structural improvement, such as a shed, garage or retaining wall to City-owned land, or land in which the City holds an interest. It can also be the personal use of Public Land (i.e. adding a patio, garage or pool to land that does not belong to you).

An encroachment agreement acts as the formal authorization between the homeowner and the City and outlines the terms and conditions for allowing an encroachment to remain in place. An encroachment agreement is registered on the property and transfers with the sale of the property. Click on [Encroachments](#) for more information.

Example of property adjacent to Barrier Wall in Sturgeon Heights



I have a fence, plants and/or shed which crosses my property line and extends into the City's property (Utility Right of Way). Am I responsible for removing them?

Landscaping will need to be evaluated and discussed individually, with the property owner. The City is planning one-on-one consultations with property owners who have landscaping or structures that cross over City property. Individual homeowners will be contacted by the City to set up a meeting to discuss the project as details emerge.

What happens to the trees near the barrier wall?

Action may be required to remove anything in conflict with the final placement of the wall, which may include the removal or pruning of trees in the construction zone. Further and direct communication will be made with impacted residents during the design process as every property is unique.

Is the alignment of the barrier wall changing?

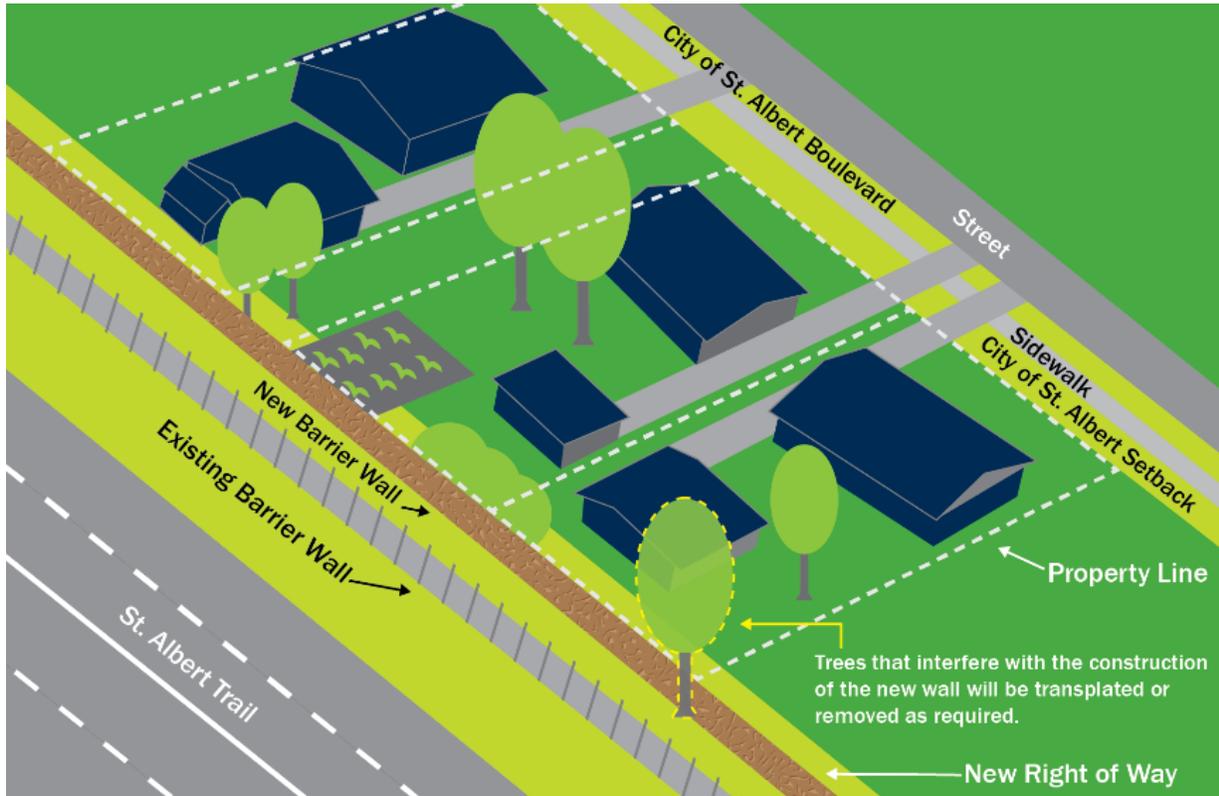
In the Sturgeon Heights neighbourhood, the alignment of the barrier wall will change to ensure that it is placed in a location that will allow it to last its expected lifecycle (75

years) without conflicting with any future enhancement opportunities along St. Albert Trail.

For example, the City will be constructing a new sidewalk along St. Albert Trail between Gate Avenue to Sturgeon Road to ensure safe travel for pedestrians, cyclists and alternative modes of transportation. Such improvements follow recent City initiatives such as St. Albert Trail Revitalization and Complete Streets, which seeks to design roadways that are accommodating for all road users, all ages and all abilities.

The new barrier wall alignment follows most of the homeowners' property lines, which is the legal separation point for the road right of way for St. Albert's Public Utility Lot and the private residence adjacent to the roadway.

For many homeowners, this means that the wall will shift east and rest directly adjacent to the property line. An example of how this will look for many homeowners:



Homeowners residing along the barrier wall may have private plants, trees or infrastructure on City land that will need to be relocated at the homeowners' expense to accommodate construction of the new wall, as well as a right-of-way for future maintenance. Encroachments onto City property, whether approved or not, must be managed prior to construction. The City is more than happy to address individual property matters on a one-on-one basis as each situation will be unique.

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Is the realignment occurring because of the LRT?

Light Rail Transit (LRT) is a future enhancement opportunity. The Campbell Park and Ride Transit Centre, at the south end of St. Albert Trail, is integral to the long-term vision of bringing LRT to St. Albert as the terminus station for the NAIT LRT line.

St. Albert Trail is an approved LRT corridor with conceptual alignment placed on the east side from the south city limit to approximately Everitt Drive North. Therefore, all work that occurs within the conceptual alignment (road right-of-way) will consider these plans.

What does this mean for my property?

Each property will have unique circumstances due to the location of the existing wall. In some locations, the new wall may be closer to the homes that would equate to a loss of area that was being utilized as an encroachment by a resident. Infrastructure, such as trees or landscaping, may be impacted if it is currently existing within the Utility Right of Way or Public Utility Lot. The City will communicate with affected property owners on their individual situations.

Will the City compensate me for the change in value of my house?

The value of your house will not be affected by the new barrier wall. The legal lot size will not change due to the installation of the new barrier wall.

What will happen to my yard during this work?

A space adjacent to the new wall will be utilized for construction. Temporary privacy fencing delineating the construction zone will be placed on the homeowner's property to keep people and animals safe. Only authorized personnel will be allowed in this work zone. The City will ask that residents keep pets and children away from the work zone. The temporary construction fence will not be as sturdy as the existing barrier wall. Pets may need to be kept on leashes to prevent them from escaping.

What will happen to my fence that is constructed against the current barrier wall?

The portion of the fence that is attached to the current barrier wall will need to be removed. Residents can do this themselves just prior to demolition of the old wall or the wall contractor will do it. It is very unlikely that the wall contractor will salvage any fence materials. At conclusion of the project, each resident will be responsible to reinstate the small portion of their fence that would connect it to the new wall.

Can residents have or purchase panels or pieces of the existing barrier wall?

Unfortunately, no. It is the City's intent to demolish and construct a new barrier wall as safely and efficiently as possible. The Contractor that will be selected to do this work will most likely adopt a demolition method that won't be able to salvage the existing wall system (i.e. use heavy machinery to disassemble the wall) and maintain the condition of the post and panel system as you may currently observe it to be in. The City intends on tendering this construction opportunity where upon successful award, the existing wall system is owned by the Contractor.