Traffic and Safety Report – 2026 Year-End Summary

New Edinburgh Community Alliance

Overall, 2026 has been a relatively stable year for traffic and safety in New Edinburgh, without any major new developments beyond the ongoing challenges associated with bridge construction and the promising progress toward the renewal of Beechwood Avenue. While some familiar concerns persist, the year has offered reason for optimism about the neighbourhood's longer-term transportation and public-realm improvements.

Community Safety and Crime

Vandalism and break-ins affecting businesses along Beechwood Avenue remain a concern. Although this appears to be an ongoing, rather than a new, challenge, the regularity of incidents is discouraging for local business owners and undermines efforts to maintain a safe, welcoming, and vibrant commercial district.

Traffic Conditions

Traffic conditions in New Edinburgh have been relatively stable over the past year, with no major new developments to report. Nevertheless, the ongoing pressures of population growth and through-traffic remain concerns, particularly during peak periods. Continued attention to traffic management, pedestrian safety, and cycling infrastructure will be important as the neighbourhood and the wider city evolve.

St. Patrick Street Bridge Renewal

The renewal of the St. Patrick Street and Porter's Island bridges has entered its second year, continuing to affect drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists travelling through the area. Construction-related restrictions and temporary changes to active transportation routes remain challenging for all road users.

Although the work is expected to pause over the winter, the community will be looking forward to its resumption and completion. Hopefully, construction can be finished before fall 2027, restoring these important connections and bringing the associated traffic disruptions to an end.

Beechwood Avenue Public Realm Plan

The City of Ottawa's Beechwood Avenue Public Realm Plan represents the most exciting development on the transportation front this year. The Functional Design Study, covering Beechwood Avenue from the Vanier Parkway to Beechwood Cemetery, sets out a vision for a safer, greener, and more attractive main street. The proposed improvements include wider sidewalks, raised bicycle lanes, public seating, coordinated streetlighting and bicycle parking, and additional trees and planting areas.

The proposals also include significant changes at several intersecting streets to create more pedestrian-friendly public spaces, as well as protected intersection designs at MacKay/Charlevoix, Springfield, St. Charles, and Putman/Marier. These measures are intended to shorten pedestrian crossing distances, improve visibility, and reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions. The possibility of burying overhead hydro lines is another welcome element, potentially freeing up space for larger trees and reducing visual clutter along the avenue.

One important outstanding concern is the exclusion of the Vanier Parkway intersection from the study. This intersection remains a significant traffic and safety challenge, and the ongoing bridge renewal and future Beechwood reconstruction present an important opportunity to coordinate improvements in this area. NECA and neighbouring community associations have emphasized the importance of addressing this issue before the westernmost blocks of Beechwood Avenue are finalized.

The next anticipated step is detailed design in 2027, with construction hopefully beginning in 2028. Reconstructing Beechwood Avenue will inevitably bring many years of disruption for residents, businesses, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. However, if the final design and construction reflect the current vision, the result could be a substantial and lasting improvement to the neighbourhood's main street. The prospect of a more accessible, safer, greener, and more inviting Beechwood Avenue is well worth working toward.

Looking Ahead

As we look toward 2027, the priorities are to see the St. Patrick Street bridge renewal completed, continue to address persistent concerns about vandalism affecting Beechwood Avenue businesses, and ensure that the Beechwood Avenue Public Realm Plan advances into detailed design with its safety and public-realm ambitions intact. Particular attention must be paid to the Vanier Parkway intersection so that this significant challenge is not left unresolved as adjacent infrastructure projects proceed.

NECA will continue to advocate for a neighbourhood that is safe, accessible, and welcoming to everyone, whether travelling by foot, bicycle, transit, or car. The year ahead offers an important opportunity to turn a promising vision for Beechwood Avenue into a practical plan for long-term improvement.