



Municipality of Port Hope

56 Queen Street
Port Hope, ON
L1A 3Z9

REPORT TO: Works and Engineering Committee

FROM: Jeanette Davidson, Director, Works and Engineering

SUBJECT: Walton Street Reconstruction and Streetscape Improvements Progress Update

DATE: July 6th, 2021

RECOMMENDATION:

That a resolution be presented to Council directing staff to complete the detailed design based on the preliminary design and public input received to date for the portion of Walton Street from Church Street to Pine Street with reconstruction to begin in 2022; and further,

That the detailed design exclude the burying of overhead utilities (telecommunication and electrical) due to the anticipated costs exceeding \$1M for the area of Walton Street between Church Street and Pine Street; and further,

That Council direct staff to develop a plan for and commence additional public and stakeholder engagement prior to moving forward with detailed design for Walton Street from Pine Street to Mill Street; and further

That Council direct staff to report back to Council in the fall/winter of 2021 with their findings from the additional public engagement and their recommendations for the final engineering and streetscape detailed design.

BACKGROUND:

To address growing deficiencies related to aging underground infrastructure on Walton Street (watermain and sanitary sewer) the Municipality has begun the necessary design work to have the infrastructure replaced from the Ganaraska River Bridge to Church Street. With the amount of disturbance to the road and sidewalks associated with the replacement of the mainline infrastructure and services and their age and condition, the Municipality is taking the opportunity to

*Walton Street Reconstruction Progress Update
Report to Works and Engineering Committee, July 6, 2021*

also make improvements to the streetscape that will enhance the existing character of the downtown as well as providing a safer, accessible, better connected and more pleasurable experience for pedestrians.

Prior Planning

There are twelve (12) prior planning documents that address the Walton Street corridor. Prepared between 1974 and 2018 many of these reports focus on the architectural elements of the buildings as key features to the character of the downtown.

The Downtown Design Development Plan was prepared by Basterfield & Associates (B&A) in 2013 and endorsed by Council. In the context of a larger downtown study area, the B&A report provides design guidance for the public realm portion of Walton Street focusing on streetscape elements. The report provides typical plan-view and cross-sections design illustrations for portions of Walton Street along with discussion of various design elements including gateways, curb extensions (bump-outs), street furniture and tree planting.

Design Directions

The design elements from the 2013 B&A report have been integrated and refined during the development of conceptual design elements for the Walton Street Reconstruction project to establish a design that builds on the guidance provided. These design elements were further refined through stakeholder consultation and included in the preliminary design options presented to the public as part of the community consultation. The overall design direction included in the preliminary design directions presented to the public included:

1. Single mainline sanitary sewer
2. Increased sizing and improved alignment for storm sewer
3. Increased sizing for watermain
4. Gateway features at Mill Street and Pine Street
5. Enhancement of Lent Lane with increased pedestrian space and streetscaping
6. Ontario Street intersection improvements options including:
 - a. Retention of east bound left turn lane (reduced parking)
 - b. Pedestrian safety improvements with bump-outs on the north side of Walton Street (loss of left turn lane, additional room for streetscape elements, no loss of parking, shorter crossing distance for pedestrians, increased queue's and delay for left turns)
7. Pedestrian crossings
 - a. Where bump outs are provided shortened crossing distance
 - b. Improved accessibility to meet current AODA requirements including tactile plates and audible signals

- c. Increased visibility of pedestrian crossings surfaces with contrasting colours
 - d. Consideration of formal pedestrian cross overs (PXO) at key crossing locations not already signalized
- 8. Targeted tree planting within widened boulevard locations (e.g. Lent Lane) and at other opportune locations (e.g. Bell parking lot – under review)
- 9. Pine Street to Brown Street transition options
 - a. With localized traffic calming with minimal impact to parking
 - b. Widened north boulevard eliminating parking (north side only)
- 10. Pavement widths will match existing

The above were the main design elements included in the preliminary design presented to the public but there were other design considerations that were explored and after review were not moved forward into the preliminary design for various reasons. Some of these elements are as follows:

- 1. Extensive tree planting – not ideal environment to support this and counter to a few previous reports suggesting limiting tree canopy to allow for clear visibility of historic architecture and commercial signage in downtown core
- 2. Cycling facilities – with objectives of maintaining parking along Walton street in the downtown core and current cycling plan recommending alternate routes, dedicated cycling facilities cannot be provided on Walton Street
- 3. Angled parking consideration – similar to the cycling facilities with the right of way being framed with historic buildings at the right of way limits there is not the opportunity to widen the road to accommodate angled parking while maintaining required sidewalk widths.

Community Engagement and Consultation

An initial design concept was developed and refined through consultation with stakeholder groups including representatives from the HBIA, Chamber of Commerce, ACO and the film industry as well as committees of Council including the Tree Advisory Committee, Parks Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Heritage Advisory Committee.

Based on the input from stakeholder groups the design concept was further developed into a preliminary design that included several options for key locations along Walton Street corridor. These options were presented to the Public at a virtual Public Information Centre (PIC) held via Zoom on April 22, 2021. Following the PIC presentation materials were made available through the Walton Street Reconstruction project page on myporthope.ca along with a comment form.

A chronology of the community engagement and consultation activities related to the Walton Street Reconstruction project is provided in the table below and

*Walton Street Reconstruction Progress Update
Report to Works and Engineering Committee, July 6, 2021*

illustrated graphically on Attachment 'A'. Attachment 'A' also illustrates the various media channels used to elevate public awareness of the project and the opportunities to be involved.

Date	Consultation Activity
July 2020	Project Notices Hand Delivered to Residents and Businesses in Project Limits
Engineering Investigations and Development of Design Element Concepts	
Nov 24, 2020	Consulted with HBIA, Chamber of Commerce and ACO
Dec 10, 2020	Consulted with Tree Advisory Committee
Dec 16, 2020	Consulted with Accessibility Advisory Committee
Dec 16, 2020	Consulted with Parks, Recreation & Culture Advisory Committee
Jan 18, 2021	Consulted with Heritage Advisory Committee
Development of Preliminary Design	
Mar 23, 2021	Launched Walton Street Project Page on myPortHope.ca
Mar 25, 2021	Posted on Facebook and Instagram Project Mentioned in MyFM Interview
Mar 30, 2021	PIC #1 Notices Hand Delivered to Residents and Businesses in Project Limits
Apr 1, 2021	Homepage Banner Posted on myPortHope.ca Promoting Walton Street Reconstruction Project Promoted in Newspaper Ad
Apr 7, 2021	Posted on Facebook and Instagram
Apr 8, 2021	Project Promoted in Newspaper as Feature Bubble
Apr 14 – 22, 2021	Project Promoted in Paid Radio Ads
Apr 15, 2021	Project Promoted in Newspaper as Feature Bubble
Apr 20, 2021	Project Promoted on Television – Municipal Matters
Apr 22, 2021	Virtual Public Information Centre #1 Held
Apr 23, 2021	Presentation Video Posted to YouTube Launched Feedback Comment Form Through myPortHope.ca
Apr 29, 2021	Project Mentioned in MyFM Interview
May 5, 2021	Posted on Facebook and Instagram
May 13, 2021	Project Mentioned in MyFM Interview Project Promoted in Newspaper as Feature Bubble
May 17, 2021	Project Promoted on Television – Municipal Matters
May 19, 2021	Extended Feedback Comment Period on myPortHope.ca
May 20, 2021	Project Promoted in Newspaper Ad
May 27, 2021	Posted on Facebook and Instagram Project Mentioned in MyFM Interview

*Walton Street Reconstruction Progress Update
Report to Works and Engineering Committee, July 6, 2021*

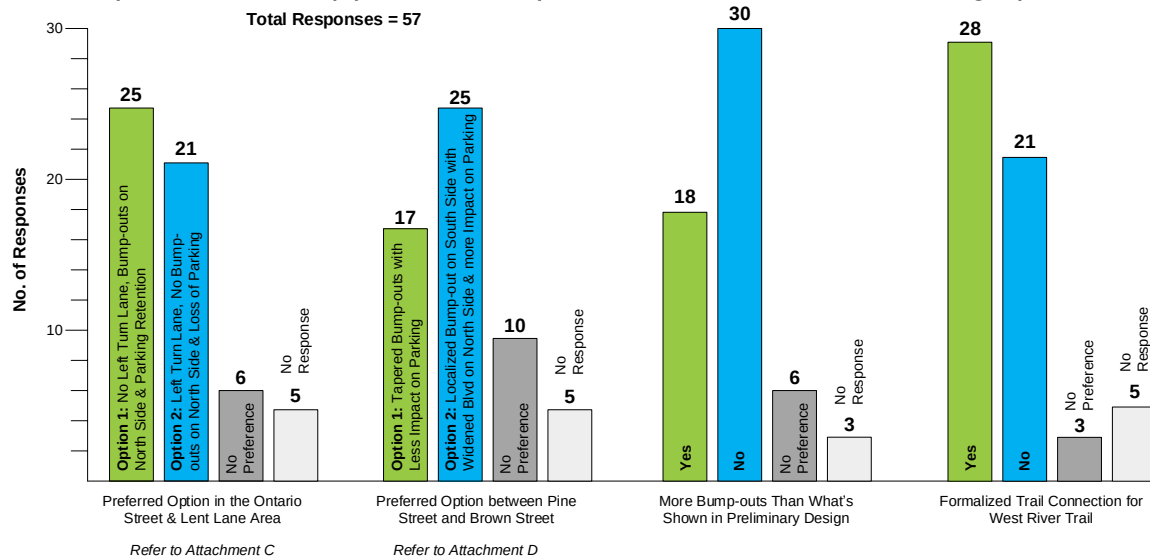
Date	Consultation Activity
	Project Promoted in Newspaper as Feature Bubble
June 11, 2021	Closed Comment Form Through myPortHope.ca

The comment form available through Walton Street Reconstruction project page on myporthope.ca/Walton-street included opportunities for the public to:

- select responses to structured questions related to the options presented as part of the preliminary design; and
- provide their own narrative input and request further engagement with the project team.

The comment period ran from April 23rd to June 11th (49 days). A total of **57** unique responses were received along with 13 comments submitted to the project team by e-mail or phone and 9 individuals engaged the project team at the public meeting.

The responses to four (4) structured questions are illustrated on the graph below.



The narrative comments received through comment forms and emails were reviewed by the project team and organized around several key themes including:

- **Private Utilities:** Responses indicating a desire for the overhead telecommunication and electrical lines west of Pine Street be relocated underground.
- **Parking:** Responses supporting the removal of on street parking in favour of more pedestrian space, counter-balanced by a similar number of responses supporting the retention of as much parking as possible. Other notable input related to parking included changing the approach to parking metering, enhancing accessible parking spaces, considering angle parking and utilizing parking in areas beyond Walton Street.

- **Bump-outs/Curb Extensions:** Responses supporting some or all of the bump-outs included in the preliminary design and a slightly greater number of responses indicating opposition to some or all of the bump-outs shown.
- **Road Closure:** Suggestions for a permanent closure of Walton Street to vehicular traffic in the downtown core, countered by responses opposed to any closure or in favour of provisions for temporary or seasonal closures to vehicular traffic.
- **Business Impacts:** Delay work in the commercial area to avoid compounding COVID-related business impacts and consider opportunities to compensate business for disruption.
- **Cycling Facilities:** Support for the approach as proposed in the preliminary design (i.e. no cycling facilities on Walton Street) potentially with some modification and a request for more rationale about cycling facility choices.
- **Traffic:** Responses suggesting improvement of sight lines, additional traffic signals (at Queen Street and Pine Street), more formal crosswalk controls and the consideration of roundabouts. Concerns about increased traffic on side street due to changes on Walton Street and negative impacts due to possible removal of the eastbound left-turn lane at Ontario Street.
- **Trees:** Responses indicating a desire to add more trees and minimize tree loss, manage the scale of trees to not overwhelm buildings, use appropriate native species and take measures to ensure health and longevity of trees.

Attachment 'B' provides an illustration of the how the narrative comments received are clustered with respect to the categories noted above and the number of comments related to various topics.

Follow-up on Public Input

Through initial consultation with utility companies (Elexicon, Bell, Cogeco) it is anticipated the cost to relocate all overhead utilities to underground would be in excess of \$1M. While there may be some limited relocation work required to accommodate the proposed reconstruction the majority of the relocation costs would be borne by the Municipality as the burying of overhead utilities is not related to the reconstruction but rather an enhancement suggested by the local residents. These costs are significant and were not considered by staff when preparing the capital budget for this project. While this would provide a visual enhancement for the area west of Pine Street staff feel the \$1M+ would be better spent on other Municipal infrastructure needs and would look to Council to provide further direction related to this public request.

The request to close Walton Street in the downtown area to vehicle traffic is not considered a viable option due to the limited connectivity of the transportation

network in the area resulting from the constraint imposed by the Ganaraska River. Eliminating the direct connection along Walton Street to the crossing of the Ganaraska River would significantly alter traffic patterns in the downtown area directing traffic to side streets and increasing traffic volumes at other river crossings and intersections.

The intersection of Ontario Street and in particular the future status of the east bound left turn lane was one of the items that the public had varying views on related to how busy the intersection was and what would result should the left turn lane be removed. While traffic count numbers were analyzed and the scenario of the left turn lane being removed modeled, showing no significant adverse effects, staff can appreciate the public's concern on this issue and suggest that real life data be collected with the temporary closure of the left turn lane over a few days during over the summer. This will provide actual data of what would result if the left turn lane was removed.

With consideration of the diverse and in some cases opposing views received through the public engagement, mainly dealing with the section of the project from Pine Street to Mill Street, and some of the feedback staff have received from Council relating to their vision for the project, staff would like to recommend further public and stakeholder engagement be completed over the next 4 to 6 months before moving forward with the detailed design of Walton Street east of Pine Street. In doing this, staff would be able to garner additional public, business owner and other stakeholder input to assist in finalizing the engineering and streetscape design which would be presented to Council for endorsement. This suggested adjustment to the project schedule would result in the reconstruction east of Pine Street not being considered until at least the 2023 construction season. This is aligned with public input suggestion.

For the section of Walton Street from Church Street to Pine Street there were not very many concerns raised, other than the buried utilities item, and as such staff would recommend that the detailed design for this section of Walton Street be moved forward such that it could be reconstructed in 2022. This timing would be contingent on Council's direction related to the burying of overhead utilities.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no significant resource implications associated with the recommended approach although this will require some additional staff and consultant time to undertake the added public engagement. Currently the design efforts are on budget and can be re-evaluated prior to finalization of the 2021 or 2022 Capital Budget depending on the timing for completion of the detailed design. The current expense was included in the 2020 Budget.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the input received to date it is recommended that detailed design for Walton Street from Church Street to Pine Street be completed over the summer and be considered for reconstruction in 2022. This will allow for part of the project to move forward which achieves the goal of staging the works over several years. While this may result in the need for some interim transition works through the Pine Street intersection the design will be optimized to minimize these works.

Based on the varying degree of public input and some noted Council concerns related to the section of Walton Street from Pine Street to Mill Street it is recommended that further public engagement be undertaken over the next 4 to 6 months prior to moving forward with the detailed design for this section of Walton Street and staff report back to Council in the fall of this year with their findings and their recommendations for the final engineering and streetscape detailed design.

Respectfully submitted.

Original Signed by:

Jeanette Davidson, Director, Works and Engineering