



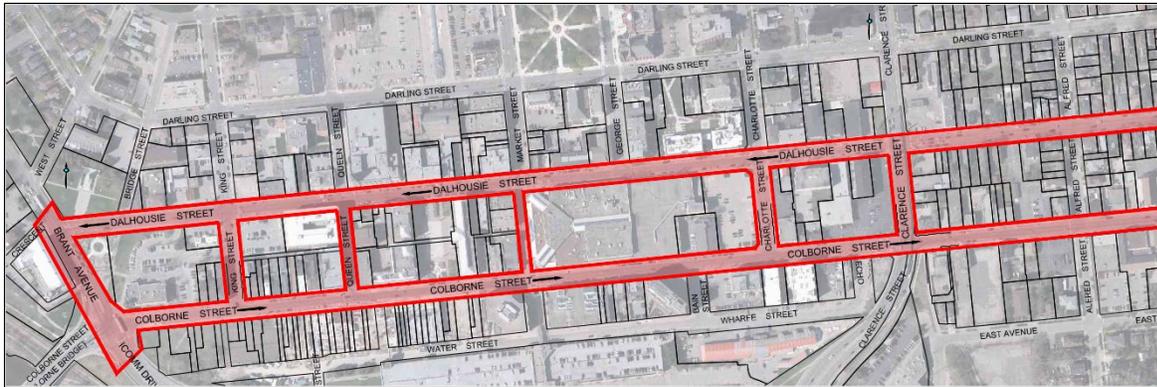
PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE (PIC#3) Downtown Streetscaping Class Environmental Assessment (EA)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



1.0 Introduction

The City of Brantford has initiated a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for streetscaping the Downtown to improve walkability, accessibility, and underground infrastructure to allow for development, enhance the infrastructure for all transportation modes, and increase pedestrian capacity. The goal of the streetscaping improvements is to create a Downtown that is attractive, vibrant and safe for users and provides the infrastructure needed to accommodate expected growth.



Map 1 - Close up of Study Area, Part 1



Map 2 - Close up of Study Area, Part 2

2.0 Frequently Asked Questions

A number of questions and comments were submitted to the project team throughout the third Public Information Centre process. Questions and comments were grouped into various themes in the section below.

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2.1 Strategies for Downtown

Question: Where are the strategies to show how the City will attract new businesses to downtown? What are the related strategies to show how the city plans to attract more businesses into the core?

Answer: The main focus of this particular study is to look at the underground infrastructure within the downtown, and what improvements are necessary to handle to projected growth within the downtown over the next 30 years. Without the improvements to the infrastructure below ground, expanding services and growth will not be possible. So while this study does not look directly at how to attract new business to the downtown, the improvements that will be made will be necessary component to attracting business downtown.

The study will propose a recommendation for streetscaping improvements that will create a destination downtown that people want to visit, one that provides accommodations for all modes of transportation, fosters street-level activity through site furnishings, a slower road network, and more greenery.

Question: What’s the plan for cycling? Where will people ride their bikes to and from?

Answer: The study is proposing the addition of separated cycling lanes that will connect eventually to the trail network to the west of the study area and the east of the study area on Colborne Street where an existing cycling path exists.



Question: My top concern about the Downtown is the one-way street system. Reducing vehicle speed, reducing driver entitlement to street, improving pedestrian and cycling safety and attracting businesses would result from a two-way system. Introducing roundabouts at each end of downtown along with two-way streets would provide drivers choice of routes and improve flow. Two-way streets would also improve connections and access.

Answer: With regards to the two-way traffic option, a thorough traffic study was conducted to assess the impacts of one way and two-way traffic. The results of that study will be included in the Environmental Study Report, and were presented at the second public information center. The results showed that the impact to traffic at certain intersections would be substantial if two-way traffic was implemented, and so the preferred approach was to continue with one-way traffic. When it comes to improving pedestrian and cycling safety, methods such as narrowing lanes, increasing pedestrian crossings, and introducing cycling lanes will vastly improve the overall safety of travelling downtown.

Roundabouts are excellent means of introducing natural traffic calming. Unfortunately, roundabouts take up larger footprints than standard signalized intersections. The downtown area is constrained by the existing buildings and narrow right of way. Roundabouts would result in significant property impact in the downtown. As part of the study, we will be reviewing the potential for a roundabout at the east and west limit, where there are fewer constraints.

Question: The street and pedestrian flows between Dalhousie and Darling Streets need to be considered. Connections to the parking structure, market and casino area need to be added or improved. Cycling routes through downtown need to be connected to existing paths and routes. Improve public transit flows to and from other parts of City to downtown.

Answer: The study is proposing the addition of separated cycling lanes that will connect eventually to the trail network to the west of the study area and the east of the study area on Colborne Street where an existing cycling path exists. The vision of the study is to increase capacity for all transit modes, including cyclists, drivers, pedestrians, and transit users. While the study at this stage has not provided in-depth details about the specific locations of pedestrian crossings, bus stops, parking stalls, etc., this information will be provided during the detailed design stage following the Environmental Assessment. It is our intent that by including cycling lanes and improved pedestrian facilities, that we will be able to provide a better connection for people to the area surrounding downtown.



Question: Is there any way to improve on public transit in the downtown?

Answer: The study has reviewed the need for improvements to public transit in the downtown. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the study, it was difficult to make accurate recommendations for improvements when ridership was decreased due to the pandemic. The City will continue to evaluate the need for improvements to public transit as ridership increases. Evaluation of servicing areas outside of downtown Brantford was outside the scope of this study.

Question: Are there any plans for rejuvenation of Downtown Brantford, and what are they?

Answer: This study is the first step in the rejuvenation of Downtown Brantford. The planned construction will update the underground infrastructure needed to service the growing demands of downtown, as well as the projected growth of residents and businesses. The proposed infrastructure improvements will ensure that all of the services that are needed are available.

Question: What are the expansion and development plans for Brantford?

Answer: This study is focused on the planned growth and development of the downtown and the surrounding area. The City has great expectations for growth and redevelopment within the downtown area. The upgrades and replacement of the underground infrastructure as part of this study will make it possible for the development in and around downtown to take place.

Question: Is the infrastructure of the whole city deteriorating?

Answer: Much of the infrastructure within the downtown core has reached the end of its serviceable life, and is in need of replacement. Some of the infrastructure is over 100 years old. The underground infrastructure is the driving need for this study, as the underground improvements are necessary for the City to continue to provide services (water, sanitary, etc.) to residents and businesses. As failures in the infrastructure occur, which they have over recent years, the cost of repairs is significant and cause untimely disturbances to businesses and residents.



Question: What is being done to encourage more of a standard of awareness and effort to do more of what we can for the environment?

Answer: One of the studies that was undertaken as part of the EA, was a natural environment study. There are a few ways in which environmental improvements are being addressed:

- The streetscape design includes the provision for more trees in the downtown, which will improve habitat, but also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improved stormwater collection systems will reduce the loading on streams and rivers, providing treatment to remove oil and grit before it makes its way to the river.
- The introduction of cycling lanes and improved pedestrian facilities to encourage active transportation through the downtown will reduce travel by cars.

2.2 Parking

Question: Please don't take parking spots away from in front 40 Queen St. as that is an apartment building with tenants who require convenient, accessible spaces. The diagram shown at the Public Information Centre did not show parking spaces on Queen Street between Darling and Dalhousie Street.

Answer: The location and orientation of parking spots will be determined through detailed design. We will collect feedback such as this as it will be imperative to determining exactly where parking is needed. Accessible parking spots will be maintained through this project.

Question: You left out "cars" and other "personal" modes of transportation in the "Enhance infrastructure for all transportation modes" paragraph. All modes of transportations must have access to the streets downtown and street parking must stay. Don't remove the 84-86 free spaces that are in downtown core.

Answer: While previous iterations of the streetscape and functional design showed a potential loss of 84 spots, the preferred alternative that was presented at Public Information Centre #3 showed no loss of on-street parking. The updated preferred alternative shows that parking will be maintained on both sides of Colborne and Dalhousie Street and the parking study has determined that this alternative will not result in a loss of on-street parking spaces. Through detailed design, every effort will be made to maintain on street parking.



Question: I'm concerned that parking is being valued more than active forms of transportation (cycling and walking), and that it's being prioritized over the social vibrancy that can result from additional outdoor space for businesses. What is wrong with reducing on-street parking on Colborne and Dalhousie by half when there is no shortage of parking downtown? I'm concerned that the prioritization of parking over separated and raised (more visible) bicycle lanes will result in less use of the bicycle lanes out of fears of safety. Doors opening and people exiting from cars into a bicycle lane cannot be the safest alternative. I hope you will choose Alternative 2 as it provides the greatest promise for an accessible and vibrant downtown.

Answer: When conducting a study such as this, the Project Team takes into account feedback from all stakeholders, including residents, businesses, organizations, schools, etc. The Project Team had the opportunity to meet with all of the stakeholders of this project, and it was clear that maintaining on street parking was something that was highly desired. The preferred alternative takes into account the need for parking, cycling lanes, and pedestrian space by creating a level space from back of curb to building face, which allows the City the greatest amount of flexibility in the future to extend patios, shift bike lanes, and whatever else may be desired in the long term. We truly cannot know what the needs will be for the downtown in the future, and so the intent was to provide a cross section that would provide the City with ample flexibility to adapt to those changing demands.

The design and configuration of the streetscape being presented provides safety for cyclists through separated cycling lanes that are delineated by bollards. When in the detailed design stage, the location of bollards can be set to reduce the safety concerns of cyclists being hit by doors.

2.3 Garbage Collection / Beautification

Question: There is an excessive amount of garbage in the public spaces and in private yards and porches. There needs to be a better disposal system to encourage keeping the city clean. Something needs to be done to clean up the city or the rest of the updates will just be a band aid short term solution.

Answer: Part of the curbside management component of this study is aimed at ensuring infrastructure is in place to better accommodate the garbage collection. The preliminary design will evaluate what space requirements will be necessary to include underground storage, while the detailed design will determine the types of garbage storage systems that can be introduced to the streetscape.

The scope of this study is to focus on the infrastructure and provide recommendations for the streetscape in the downtown. While the study will focus on the provision of infrastructure, the City of Brantford Public Works Commission manages that waste



disposal systems and any changes to the collection in the downtown will be a City initiative outside of this study.

Question: Preferred Alternative (3) is excellent. My one wish would be that entry (from Gretzky to Colborne to core) into the city was more attractive. Would it be possible to have local artists paint the sides of building walls with scenes from Brantford to make the streets look more attractive?

Answer: One of the elements that is included in the streetscape design is entry features at Clarence Street and Brant Avenue. These entry features are a key element in making the downtown a destination, people should know they have arrived.

The study does not look at anything outside the City's right of way, so any of the buildings are beyond the scope of the study and something that can be investigated by the City.

2.4 Cost

Question: How much money of the approximate \$800,000 budgeted for this study has been spent to date? Is the study expected to come in under, over or at budget by completion?

Answer: Approximately 60% of the budget is spent to date. At this time there is no significant risk to the project going over budget.

2.5 Safety

Question: The proposed plans for the Downtown address my concerns, but changes won't take place for at least five years. As a resident of the downtown, my top concern every single day is safety, especially around the Market Centre Parkade and Library, as well as drivers speeding on Colborne in the summer. The City needs to address the concerns now, not in the future. The speeding on Colborne Street is out of control in the summer and the noise level is unreasonable.

Answer: We believe that the streetscape plans will address all of the concerns that you have presented, specifically the natural traffic calming that will occur. The hope is that once the first phases of construction are able to begin, they will start to introduce the necessary traffic calming by narrowing the laneway and introducing more pedestrian crossings. With regards to short term plans, the City has other departments and studies ongoing, including the Downtown Brantford Improvement Task Force, that are focused on addressing the safety concerns within the downtown.



Question: I am concerned about pedestrian safety, especially as a disabled/handicapped senior. There are not enough crosswalks. Additionally, the traffic on Colborne and Dalhousie is terrible, especially from 11am to 5pm. I don't feel safe at night in downtown, or even during the day.

Answer: The streetscape design will focus on making the downtown more accessible. The design will meet all of the accessibility design standards at the time of construction. The design also includes the addition of multiple mid-block crossings, as well as bump outs at all intersections which vastly reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians.

2.6 Evaluation

Question: How are the bicycle safety levels of Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 the same, when the former provides a protected bicycle lane and the latter poses a risk of "dooring" from parked cars?

Answer: The safety score assigned to the alternatives is not specific to the safety of the cyclists on the separated cycling lane, but rather a reflection of the overall safety of the alternative. There is a significant increase in safety for cyclists when they are provided a dedicated separated facility. With the width of the cycle lane, as well as the placement of bollards between the cycle lane and parking lane, a risk of dooring is greatly reduced.

Question: Can you please clarify why Alternative 3 has a great social environment rating than Alternative 2, when the former offers parking and the latter more space for businesses, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Answer: When speaking with all of the stakeholders, there was a clear need to maintain as much of the on street parking as possible. While some view additional space for patios as desirable, others may perceive parking as more relevant. The cross section being presented allows for a great degree of flexibility, and can be adapted to changing habits and behaviours.



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