



# VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE #2 Downtown Streetscaping Class Environmental Assessment (EA)

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)





[www.LetsTalkBrantford.ca/Downtown](http://www.LetsTalkBrantford.ca/Downtown).

To better understand the background of the Downtown Brantford Streetscaping Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA), please review the material presented in the PIC presentation and video prior to reviewing this document.

As a recap, the PIC presentation video featured information regarding the following topics:

- Review of study area, EA process, and status
- Vision – Problem/Opportunity Statement
- Review of key studies
- Review of feedback received to date
- Review of evaluation criteria
- Alternatives and evaluation
- Technically preferred alternative



## 2.0 Frequently Asked Questions

A number of questions and comments were submitted to the Project Team throughout the second Virtual Public Information Centre. Questions and comments were grouped into various themes in the section below.

### Question Theme Index

<b>1.0</b>	<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b><i>Frequently Asked Questions</i></b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Traffic Operations</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Safety Downtown</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Downtown Parking</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Community</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Cycle Lanes</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Construction Timing</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b><i>Comments/Questions</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>



## **2.1 Traffic Operations**

### **Why is two-way traffic being considered?**

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process requires that a variety of solutions are considered. To meet the requirements of the EA, the Project Team determined that if consideration was not given to the two-way alternative, that we would not have done our due diligence in evaluating a variety of alternatives. The evaluation of the various alternatives included two options with two-way traffic operations and determined that they were not the preferred solutions based on the established evaluation criteria.

### **Will the EA look at widening the roadway on Colborne and Dalhousie Street?**

When we look at the traffic study which provides projections for traffic Downtown through 2041, there is no need identified to widen the roadway in Downtown. The City has a narrow right of way through Downtown, and widening the roadway would have significant impact to properties and buildings.

### **Is one-way traffic safer than two-way traffic?**

There is not a clear answer as to whether one-way traffic is safer than two-way traffic. Features we are looking to implement including narrower lane widths to reduce speed, bump-outs at intersections to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians, improved pedestrian crossings, will all improve the overall safety Downtown. These will be implemented under a one-way or two-way scenario, and will contribute to much of the improvement in safety. From a traffic perspective, one-way and two-way are very similar with respect to safety.

## **2.2 Safety Downtown**

**In what ways can this study and the work being proposed improve perceptions of safety Downtown? Will the study be addressing vacancy rates, open lots, alley ways, and how will crime prevention through environmental design principles be incorporated?**

While this work will not provide a complete solution to the referenced items, there are a few ways that the outcomes of this study can improve the perception of safety. This includes consideration of open sight lines



and reducing the potential for ‘hiding spaces’ with the placement of streetscape elements and lighting (also known as CPTED or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). A goal of this project is to create a place that people want to go, and by attracting more residents and visitors to the Downtown it will increase the presence of others and eyes on the street.

### **Why is safety the same in all alternatives?**

Safety is evaluated the same in each alternative because in each of the alternatives, for one-way and two-way, all of the same safety improvements will be included.

- Narrower lanes to slow traffic;
- Improved pedestrian crossing, including reduced crossing distances; and
- Improved pedestrian and cycling facilities.

These features will improve the overall safety Downtown, and will be applied in all options considered.

## **2.3 Downtown Parking**

### **Why is on street parking being prioritized Downtown?**

Although there is a general movement towards the accommodation of active transportation over the reliance on single vehicle traffic, parking is still an important component of a successful Downtown. Convenient, short term parking for deliveries or pick-ups, or for accessibility reasons should still be provided. The preferred alternative for the right-of-way would reduce the overall on-street parking provision for Downtown, requiring further utilization of off-street parking.

## **2.4 Community**

### **What is the value to the community of all of the work you are proposing?**

There are a few ways that this project will provide value to the community:

- Improved underground infrastructure - Improved underground infrastructure is needed to support development within the Downtown. The increased development will mean more people living and working Downtown, which is in line with the City’s Official Plan.



- Streetscaping – With the infrastructure improvements being made, most of the Downtown will be disturbed, and this is an opportunity to reconstruct the above-ground roadways.
- Improved public health – This plan provides more active transportation options through increased pedestrian space to walk, and cycling facilities, encouraging healthy options for the community.
- Vibrancy and placemaking – Streetscaping elements such as benches, public art, street trees, etc. add to the vibrancy and create a place where people want to go. These improvements will contribute to creating a destination place, improving opportunities for businesses and outside investment.
- Climate – By incorporating active transportation options, it reduces the reliance of single-vehicle travel to and within the Downtown. This, along with the provision of more plantings and street trees will promote the natural environment and reduce carbon emissions.

### **What value do cycling lanes add to the business community?**

The addition of cycling lanes Downtown is intended to promote more active transportation. The objective is to make the Downtown more of a destination for all users, including those who drive, cycle, walk, and take transit. Due to the close proximity of Downtown to the trail network, the intent is that the provision of cycling lanes in the Study Area will draw more activity to the Downtown which will attract all users and visitors who may not normally use the Downtown streets. By providing cycling lanes and bike racks, it is meant to draw more people to the Downtown who will visit the various restaurants, shops, and other businesses in the core.

## **2.5 Cycle Lanes**

**How are we justifying the inclusion of cycling lanes in the design, is it based solely on the survey responses that we received, or is there a fulsome study that was completed that indicated the need for cycle lanes?**

Part of the rationale for including the cycle lanes is that the City's Transportation Master Plan indicates Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street as bikeways. What was established in the workshop sessions with stakeholders was the vision for the project. The City is aligned with finding ways to encourage active transportation Downtown and throughout the City.



## **Have other cycling routes been considered?**

At this point alternate bike routes have not been considered. We have tried to ensure that our findings are consistent with the City's Transportation Master Plan. As we get into more detailed design, we will look at whether consideration for alternate cycling routes is feasible.

## **Why did all alternatives presented include cycle lanes?**

Cycle lanes have been a feature that has been endorsed by stakeholders throughout this study. At the stakeholder workshops, nearly every group indicated that they would like to see cycle lanes, and all of the feedback showed that they were important to people. Additionally, the City's Transportation Master Plan indicates Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street as part of the City's cycling network.

## **What is the benefit of single bike lanes rather than bidirectional?**

The main benefit of the single bike lane is that it limits the space taken up by cycle lanes within the cross section. Having one lane, rather than two on each street means more space on each street for wider pedestrian walkways, patio space, and other features the community might want to see.

## **2.6 Construction Timing**

### **When is construction going to occur?**

There is quite a significant amount of design and utility coordination that needs to be completed before construction activities can begin. This study is expected to be completed by the end of 2021, and detailed design could begin in early 2022. Detailed design would need a minimum of a year. Construction of the road is likely to start following detailed design and would be phased over years.

### **Will you be doing the full roadway at one time? How will you reduce disruption to businesses and activity in the core?**

The full roadway would not be constructed all at once. While we do not have the complete phasing determined at this time, we expect that construction would take place a block or two at a time. Much more detail



would be available once the design progresses, and the City will communicate construction plans with the business community.

## **2.7 Miscellaneous**

### **What is the possibility of closing Colborne Street to through traffic, with the exception of timed access for service vehicles such as taxi cabs and accessible transit vans?**

While the closure of streets is an option to be considered when determining how a right-of-way in the Downtown may be programmed, we have proposed the right-of-way to still accommodate through traffic to meet current and anticipated service levels as outlined in the Transportation Master Plan. Streets should be designed to offer flexibility in order to accommodate change in use over time. Before a street is fully closed, we would encourage that pilot projects first be undertaken to close off a street in order to evaluate how that closure, or a modification to the service level is received.

### **How will public feedback be incorporated into this study and final recommendations be made? If we provide comments how can we ensure they will be considered in the study?**

The Project Team is recording and responding to all of the responses received. All responses and comments are reviewed and evaluated. When looking at individual feedback, we have to balance all of the priorities or preferences to make decisions, then use the evaluation criteria outlined in the study to make decisions. Every comment received will be part of the Environmental Study Report document filed at the end of the project, including the individual response to each comment.

### **What are the demographics of the workshop attendees?**

The workshop attendees consisted of City staff, Members of Council, business owners, and representatives from a variety of organizations including Brantford Police Service, Brantford Public Library, Conestoga College, Wilfrid Laurier University, Grand River Council on Aging, etc.

### **What types of greenery will be planted Downtown?**

As we proceed further with the streetscaping design, we will be looking into the varieties and locations of plantings within the Downtown. We will



be looking at underground cells that promote and allow for larger growth of street trees, while also managing stormwater runoff.

**When will you be looking at specific elements like furniture, plantings lighting, etc.?**

The next phase of this project will begin to put a picture together of what the overall streetscape will look like. As we complete this round of public engagement, we will be taking the feedback we have received to date, and start to determine what features will be included, as well as how and where they will be located. We anticipate that the details will be presented at the next PIC which is expected in Summer 2021.



### 3.0 Comments/Questions

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