

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date	Wednesday, May 22, 2024
Subject	Downtown Streetscaping and Construction Mitigation Orientation Workshop

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to share information with members of Council and the community on alternatives for the Level of Service (LoS) of the downtown streetscape in response to two Council resolutions related to downtown streetscaping planning, and outline construction mitigation efforts as part of the Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program (DTIRP).

Key Findings

The Workshop provides an opportunity for Council to learn about budgeted streetscaping LoS, various unbudgeted streetscape LoS alternatives, and related key considerations. In addition, Council will be engaged in a discussion regarding feedback they are hearing from their constituents and about construction mitigation measures that can be implemented to lessen the disruption of construction, including engagement, communications, transportation, business access, and phasing and pacing of construction.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program advances [Guelph's housing pledge](#) and the City's asset management needs through the replacement and upsizing of aging underground infrastructure to support growth in Downtown Guelph. At the same time, this work supports caring for the community space and places through constructing foundations for placemaking that will be incorporated on the street level as it's rebuilt.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

People and Economy

Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Improve housing supply

City Building: Grow and care for our community space and places

People and Economy: Make downtown a vibrant place for everyone

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The adopted 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget was prepared for each reconstruction project within the DTIRP to have the “Good” (i.e., existing) LoS for streetscaping.

Report

The [Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program](#) will maintain infrastructure in a state of good repair, enable new housing development, and support economic development within Downtown Guelph. This program is focused on the reconstruction of public realm linear assets (e.g., roads, pipelines) in alignment with other City initiatives to ensure Downtown Guelph will thrive for generations to come.

The Workshop will focus on two primary topics:

- i) Streetscape Level of Service (a.k.a. LoS), and
- ii) Construction Mitigation.

No decisions or direction will be made at the Workshop; it is for informational discussion only.

Streetscape

This Workshop is intended to fulfill two prior resolutions from Council related to the downtown streetscaping planning:

1. From 2019: “That Staff be directed to review the budget allocated to Downtown Streetscapes and the proposed civic square to identify good, better and best options for consideration and report back in 2022.”
2. From 2023: “That Staff be directed to bring options for downtown streetscaping to Council for consideration in the first half of 2024, with any adjustments required to the capital budget and funding strategy to be made through the 2025 budget confirmation.”

The objective of the Workshop is to provide Council with an understanding of four conceptual streetscaping LoS scenarios through the context of the DTIRP Phase 1 – Wyndham Street North Reconstruction project for which there are four options:

1. Good (existing); currently funded within Multi-Year Budget
2. Better 1; approximately an additional +\$5 million
3. Better 2; approximately an additional +\$10 million
4. Best; approximately an additional +\$15 million

Attachment-1 Streetscaping Options and Background provides additional detail regarding streetscape options.

Construction Mitigation

The Workshop will also include aspects of construction mitigation to inform Councillors of what impacts can be anticipated regarding different arrangements of construction activities. Construction mitigation is being discussed with specific focus on construction phase planning to identify the best possible pace of construction, how to maintain safe access for residents, businesses, customers, deliveries, public works, solid waste services, forestry, transit, and emergency services, and how to minimize the disruption caused by noise, dust, and other environmental factors.

“Fast-paced” and “Slow-paced” conceptual phasing plans have been prepared and Council will have the opportunity to explore the impacts of these two options and compromises that can be made between them. As well, Council can discuss other construction mitigation measures that staff are considering and inform staff of feedback Council is hearing from the community.

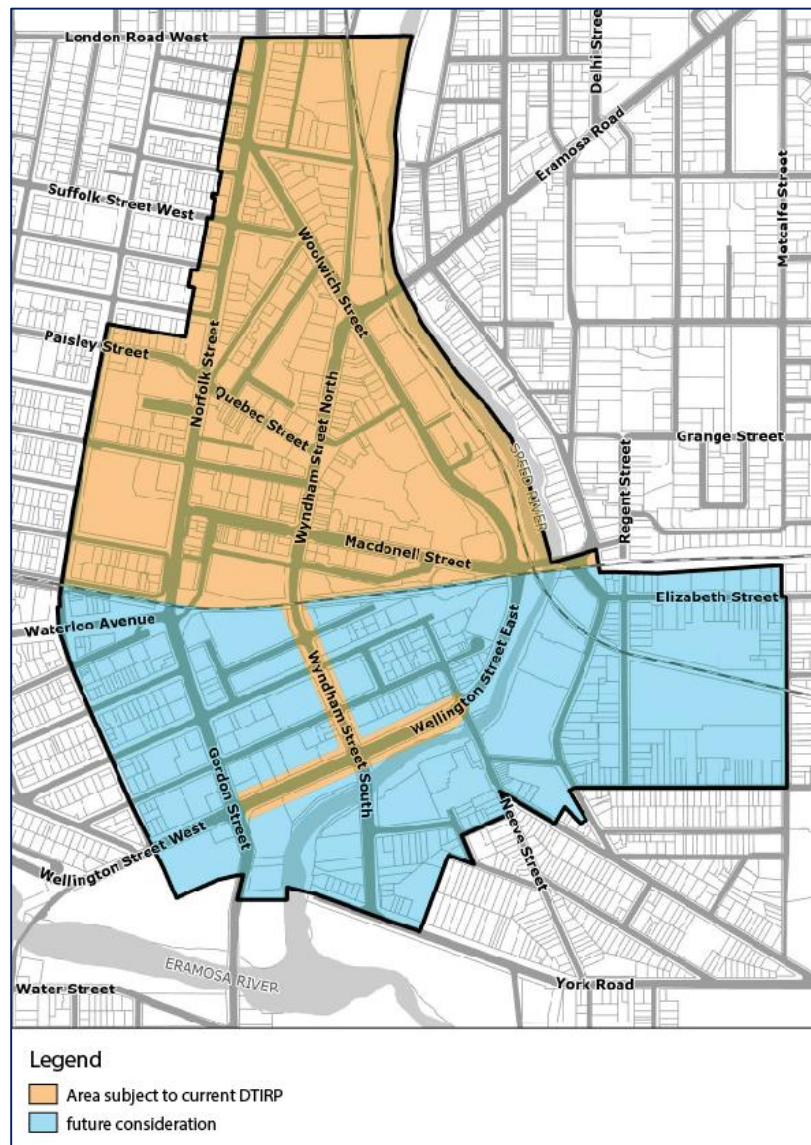
Attachment-2 Construction Mitigation Background provides additional details for Council’s information prior to the Workshop.

DTIRP Status – Active Projects

Capital Implementation Plan

The Capital Implementation Plan (CIP) project has been focused on presenting a preliminary phasing plan for the DTIRP and engaging with Downtown Guelph businesses and the public on construction mitigation options. Between March 18 and April 14, the public were invited to complete an online survey. A public open house was hosted on Wednesday, March 27 to showcase the preliminary phasing plan and discuss what mitigation measures would make the construction more manageable for local businesses and residents. A door-to-door business survey was also conducted during the engagement period collect feedback and engagement with businesses directly along the Wyndham Street North corridor, as they are the first to be impacted when construction for Phase 1 starts in 2026.

Figure 1: The study limits of the Capital Implementation Plan (orange) within the Downtown Secondary Plan area (blue and orange combined)



Wyndham Street Municipal Class Environmental Assessment

[The Wyndham Street Municipal Class Environmental Assessment](#) (EA) was completed and accepted by Council in February 2024. The discussions of the Workshop are based on the findings of this EA with respect to road cross-section and the geometrics of the St. George’s Square.

Macdonell and Allans Structures Environmental Assessment

The [Macdonell and Allans Structures EA](#) is currently underway. The short-list of options is being studied in detail for public presentation in Q3/Q4 2024.

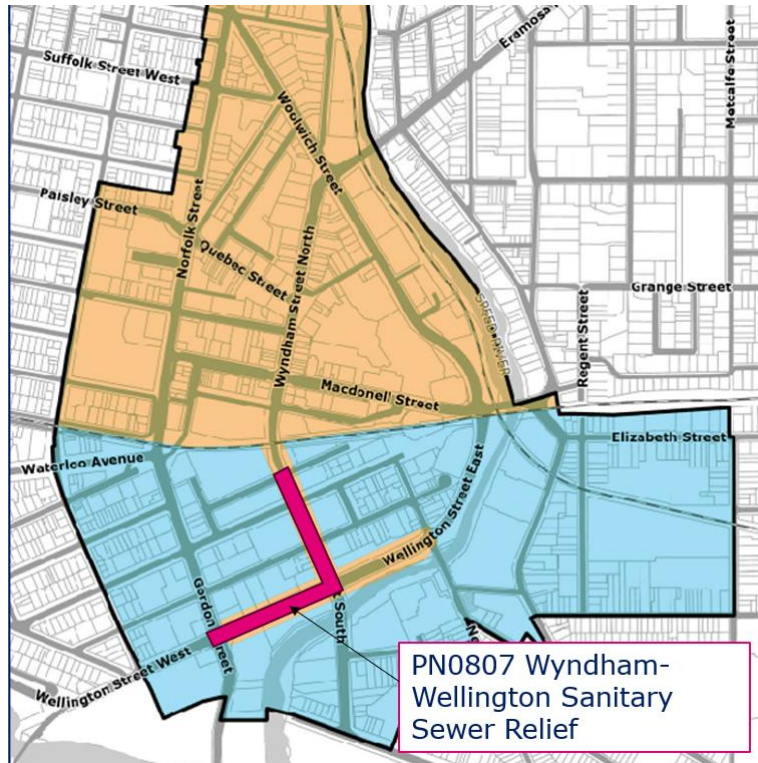
Wyndham-Wellington Sanitary Sewer Relief

The [Wyndham-Wellington Sanitary Sewer Relief](#) project has been initiated to resolve a sanitary sewer surcharging risk along Wyndham Street South and

Wellington Street East, with the goal of opening development opportunities within the Downtown Secondary Plan area.

An application has been made in response to a recent call for applications under the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund for federal funding related to housing. If the City is successful, the work will commence in spring 2025. If not, the project scope will be reviewed.

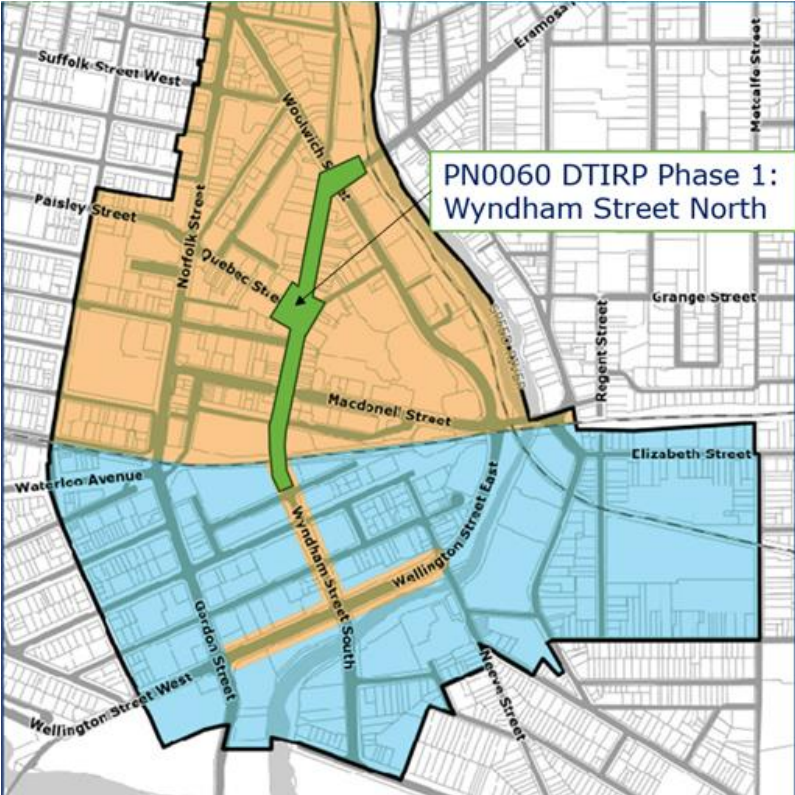
Figure 2: The project limits of the Wyndham-Wellington Sanitary Sewer Relief project



DTIRP Phase 1 – Wyndham Street North, from Farquhar Street to Woolwich Street

The [DTIRP Phase 1 – Wyndham Street North](#) project represents the first implementation phase of the overall Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program. The project encompasses the reconstruction of Wyndham Street North from Farquhar Street to Woolwich Street, including replacement of all underground infrastructure, third-party utility upgrades/adjustments, implementation of the Wyndham Street EA preferred cross-section/St. George’s Square configuration, and streetscaping works.

Figure 3: The project limits of the DTIRP Phase 1 – Wyndham Street North project



The detailed design assignment for DTIRP Phase 1 has been awarded and a kickoff meeting with a wide range of internal stakeholders and subject matter experts has been held to capture key concerns at the start of design to ensure that all perspectives are being considered.

Innovative to the City, a Construction Review Panel (CRP) consisting of up to four pre-qualified general contractors is being formed to provide quality assurance of the project. These general contractors will be involved throughout the design period and will participate in design, phasing, constructability, costing and staging reviews to identify potential issues early and mitigate risks during construction.

Maintaining the transportation network, particularly transit operations and emergency service access, will be an important mitigation aspect of the project. The Traffic Engineering and Transit teams are regularly consulted to identify strategies to minimize delays, disruption, and operating cost impacts. The City's Traffic team will be conducting a study this spring of traffic movements at various intersections throughout the Downtown area which will be used to inform mitigation strategies for vehicular, commercial and transit movements during construction. Pedestrian and cycling movements downtown during construction will similarly be reviewed. Pedestrian access will always be available to businesses.

DTIRP Phase 1 will be the primary subject of the Council Workshop.

Financial Implications

The adopted 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget has included the "Good" level of streetscaping for Downtown projects. An increase in the project budgets for a

higher level of streetscaping would have development charges, tax levy and utility rate impacts.

While the specific allocation of these reserve funds vary by DTIRP project, the approximate allocation of the funding is 20 per cent tax levy supported reserve funds, 64 per cent utility rate supported reserve funds and 16 per cent development charge reserve funds.

Through the adopted 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget, the associated reserve funds are projected to reach deficits over the 10-year forecast and work is underway to prioritize projects within available funding. Adding additional project costs will not be affordable without increasing taxes and utility rates, and/or further deprioritizing other projects across the city.

Consultations and Engagement

Community engagement around streetscaping was extensive during the development of the Downtown Streetscape Manual (2014). Additional engagement around public realm use and St. George's Square informed the Wyndham Street North Cross-section and St. George's Square intersection form and function that was approved by Council in February 2024. Each of the streetscape options presented build upon prior engagement activities.

Construction mitigation specific engagement activities include:

- March 2024 – Community conversation on Breezy Breakfast
- March 2024 – Downtown Guelph Business Association meeting
- March and April 2024 – Door-to-door conversations with Downtown business owners and operators
- March and April 2024 – Public open house and Have Your Say survey

Additional public engagement touchpoints are expected over the next year, including:

- Q3/Q4 2024 – Second public open house for the Capital Implementation Plan
- Q4 2024 – Public open house for the recommended option for Macdonell and Allan's Structures EA
- Q1 2025 – First public open house for DTIRP Phase 1 – Wyndham Street North at the 60per cent detailed design stage

Communications

In support of the DTIRP, a long-standing campaign to help inform, educate, and drive positive perceptions around the DTIRP body of work is being rolled out.

The goal of this campaign is to help the community prepare for upcoming changes through building awareness and desire, and creating excitement for the end state of DTIRP, while also preparing them for the work that will be required to get us there. This campaign will capture the needs and desires of a variety of Downtown stakeholders.

The Diggable Downtown Guelph campaign (Attachment-3) will highlight the many ways that DTIRP is working to leverage what's great about Downtown Guelph now and how it will be made even better in the future. By layering bold messaging, dynamic imagery, and optimistic headlines, it directly invites the audience to

imagine themselves in the most desirable versions of their future Downtown destinations.

Next Steps

This Workshop is for information purposes only and there will not result in specific actionable outcomes.

The next engagement touchpoint for the Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program will be the second public open house for the Capital Implementation Plan expected in fall 2024, which will coincide with beginning public engagement for the DTIRP Phase 1 – Wyndham Street North detailed design project.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Streetscaping Options and Background

Attachment-2 Construction Mitigation Background

Attachment-3 Diggable Downtown Guelph Campaign

Attachment-4 Streetscape and Construction Mitigation Workshop Staff Presentation

Attachment-5 Policies and Studies Background Summary

Departmental Approval

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