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Proposed Trail from Yonge Street to Rita's Avenue Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2020-86

Department(s): Engineering Services; Planning Services

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Meeting Date: November 16, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Proposed Trail from Yonge Street to Rita's Avenue dated November 16, 2020 be received; and,
2. That the improvements to the existing trail and sidewalk connections as outlined in this report (Option 3) be approved as an alternative to a connection from Rita's Avenue to Yonge Street through the conveyed lands as previously presented (Options 1 and 2); and,
3. That the budget necessary to complete the improvements to the existing trail be considered as part of future budget considerations; and
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Executive Summary

Staff has previously presented two design options (Options 1 and 2) to Council to implement a trail connection from Rita's Avenue to Yonge Street; more recently, Council directed staff to explore alternative trail options at a lower cost, including the use of existing facilities in this area of Town.

Limited opportunities exist to further reduce the cost of the two previously-presented options, however a third option (improving the existing trail network) may be feasible and can act as an alternative connection to Yonge Street from the residential developments in this area.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an alternate lower cost trail option in accordance with previous Council direction.

Background

When the 2012 subdivision agreement between Landmark Estates (1209104 Ontario Limited) and the Town of Newmarket was executed (the "Subdivision Agreement"), a strip of land, measuring 9.2 metres in width stretching from Rita's Avenue to Yonge Street was conveyed to the Town for the purposes of a trail connection intended to be constructed in 2015 (the "Proposed Trail"). The intention to convey these lands to the municipality had been contemplated since 1994 when the original draft plan was approved by the Region of York.

At the September 8, 2014 Council meeting, when considering this trail, the following recommendations were adopted:

THAT any construction plans and future work on the proposed walkway on Tom Taylor Crescent be immediately halted;

AND THAT staff explore all options associated with alternate treatments, including conveyance and naturalization for that area and report back to Committee of the Whole.

Staff brought forward a subsequent report (2015-12) to the April 13, 2015 Committee of the Whole meeting recommending Council direct staff to implement the Proposed Trail and organize the required Public Information Centre. Council received the report and ultimately adopted the below recommendation:

THAT Staff bring back a report with the intent of significantly reducing the impact that the trail will have on residents' properties by lessening the size and right-of-way of the path, preserving existing trees, plantings, privacy fence and low impact lighting.

The Town's engineering consultant was retained to prepare a study to assess the feasibility of developing the Proposed Trail, with the objective being to analyze the general physical conditions of the study area and recommend design options for a trail system that would have minimal impact while maintaining pedestrian safety and accessibility.

Staff brought forward a further report (2015-44) to the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 30, 2015 (the "November 2015 Report") recommending that Council endorse Option 2 as contained in the report as being the preferred option for the proposed trail connection from Rita's Avenue to Yonge Street. The Committee did not endorse the staff recommendations but, instead, directed staff to provide alternate trail options for the area at a lower cost.

Most recently, at the Council meeting of January 18, 2016, the matter was brought forward for reconsideration resulting in Council adopting the following recommendations:

THAT staff provide alternate trail options for this area at a lower cost, including the option of extending the trail through George Luesby Park along Clearmeadow Boulevard to Yonge Street and further connecting the trail from Flanagan Court/Rita's Avenue to the George Luesby Park Trail;

AND THAT staff also include in the report the option of installing lighting along the George Luesby Park Trail.

Discussion

The Town's Active Transportation Network Implementation Plan identifies a trail generally connecting Rita's Avenue to Yonge Street as part of an overall east-west trail connection from Bathurst Street to Yonge Street, and the two previous trail options (Options 1 and 2) provided for this direct connection.

Options 1 and 2

Options 1 and 2 use the same location but differ in a range of other aspects. The complete list of differences are set out in the cost estimates which are included as Attachments 1 and 2, updated to reflect 2020 dollars. Option 1 is now estimated to cost approx. \$445,000 and Option 2 is now estimated to cost approx. \$787,000. It should be noted that this Option has been pared down to reduce costs, and therefore omits items such as placemaking features, seating, plantings and lighting.

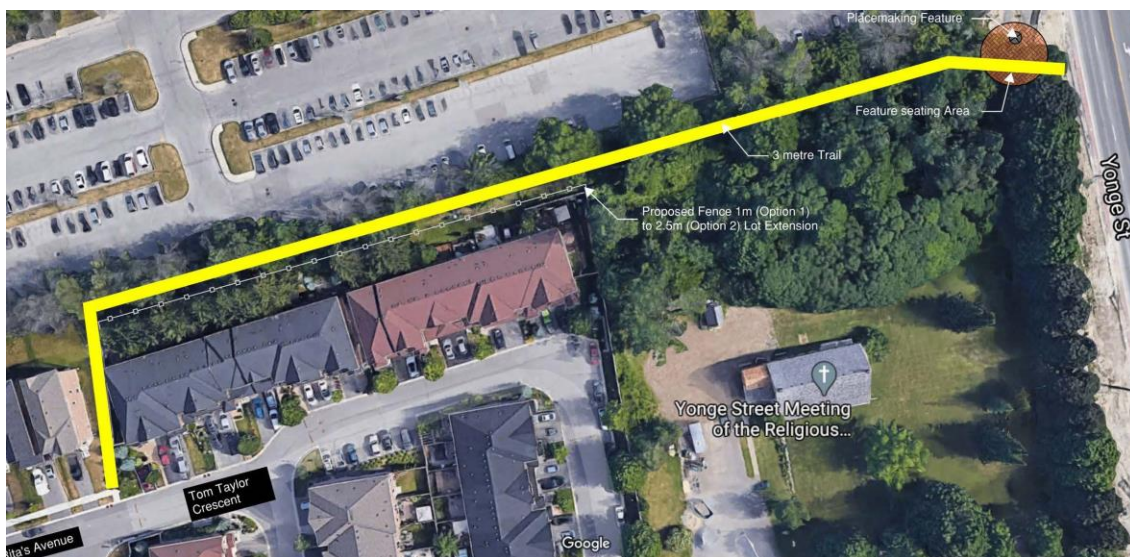


Figure 1 - Map showing Options 1 and 2 in yellow

As per Council direction, staff has again reviewed these two options with a view to reducing costs, and has determined that this could likely best be accomplished by

minimizing proposed planting additions and eliminating the proposed lighting, placemaking feature, and feature seating area. Changing the surface treatment from asphalt to granular and reducing the width of the trail to below Town standards could further reduce the costs of trail option 1 and 2 but with an impact to yearly trail maintenance standards, accessibility for residents with mobility issues, and cost. This has resulted in a third option (Option 3) for Council's consideration, as outlined below.

Option 3

Option 3 involves using the existing trail infrastructure from Rita's Ave to Clearmeadow through the Hydro Corridor.

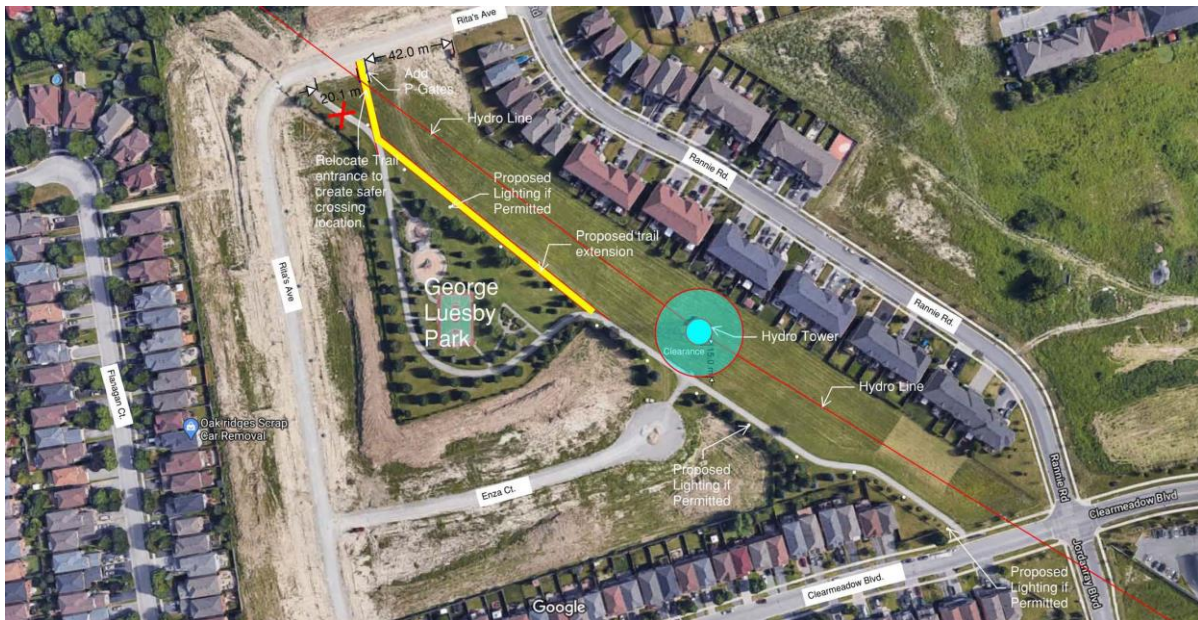


Figure 2 - Option 3 shown in yellow

Cost - The total cost for Option 3 is estimated to be approx. \$224,000. Please see Attachment 3 for the complete estimate. Again, it should be noted that this Option has been pared down to reduce costs, and therefore omits items such as plantings and lighting.

Connectivity - Although Option 3 does not increase connectivity to the intensification corridor or provide the direct connection to Yonge Street as contemplated in the Active Transportation Network Implementation Plan (that is, residents of Rita's Avenue and Tom Taylor Place would need to walk west before going south and then east again to Yonge Street), it is a less disruptive solution that would provide an improved connection to Yonge Street for people using the balance of the trail network from the west.

Plantings - In terms of plantings and lighting within the hydro corridor or adjacent to the trail, a limited list of shrubs are permitted but must remain outside of the 15m clearance area around any hydro tower and must not grow above 4m in height.

Lighting - Staff attempted to contact Hydro One regarding the provision of lights along the trail, however according to the guidelines, permanent structures are not permitted in the Hydro corridor, and Hydro One prefers to minimize the use of conductive (metallic) materials in the corridor. If feasible in option 3, lighting will be subject to the full review of, and approval by, Hydro One.

Trail Network

Options 1, 2 and 3 all complete an east/west trail connection in this area of the Town between Bathurst Street and Yonge Street. The map included as Attachment 4 provides context for all three options, shown in blue, in the overall trail network.

Use and Potential Conveyance of the Proposed Trail Land

The Subdivision Agreement provides for the conveyance of the Proposed Trail to the Town for a future public walkway. The Town's obligation in relation to the use and potential conveyance of the Proposed Trail land is set out in the *Planning Act* which provides that land conveyed to a municipality for park or other recreational purposes must be used for such purposes, but may be sold by the municipality at any time.

The Urban Centres Secondary Plan shows the area of the Proposed Trail as being a "Future Local Road". With this land secured by the Town, this area could be expanded over the long term into a full road, including active transportation accommodations. Additional land required for this road would be secured through the redevelopment of the abutting property to the north.



Figure 3 - Secondary Plan's "Future Local Road" in light blue

Conclusion

Option 3, as described, provides an alternate lower cost trail option for Council's consideration. Although this option does not increase connectivity to the intensification corridor or provide the direct connection to Yonge Street, it is a less disruptive solution that would provide an improved connection to Yonge Street for people using the balance of the trail network from the west.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

- Safe Transportation (Streets)
- Vibrancy on Yonge, Davis and Mulock

Consultation

Engineering Services, Planning Services and Legal Services were consulted during the preparation of this report.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

Attachments 1, 2 and 3 provide full costing for the three options. These are summarized below:

Options	Capital Budget Impact (rounded)	Yearly Operational Budget Impact (rounded)
Option 1	\$445,000	\$10,300
Option 2	\$787,000	\$10,300
Option 3	\$224,000	\$4,600

Annual operation budget impact includes the following, where applicable:

- Tree Maintenance
- Garden bed maintenance
- Grass cutting
- Garbage pick-up
- Lighting inspection
- Trail sweeping
- Snow removal
- Salting

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Option 1 Cost Estimates
- Attachment 2 - Option 2 Cost Estimates
- Attachment 3 - Option 3 Cost Estimates
- Attachment 4 - Trail Network Map

Submitted by

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