



## Active Transportation and Trails Advisory Committee

November 12, 2024, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
Conestoga Room  
City of Kitchener  
200 King Street W, Kitchener, ON N2G 407

Present: V. Hand, Chair  
M. Bells, Vice-Chair  
W. West, Member  
P. Charbonneau, Member  
B. Tracey, Member  
G. Piccini, Member  
L. Dramnitzki, Member  
J. Broschek, Member  
B. Forwell, Member

Staff: D. Kropf, Manager, Active Transportation & Development  
L. Christensen, Project Manager, Trails  
A. Carlyle, Committee Administrator

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### 1. Commencement

The meeting began with a Land Acknowledgement given by the Chair.

### 2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None.

### 3. Delegations

None.

### 4. Discussion Items

#### 4.1 Places and Spaces Update

From 2021 to 2024, City of Kitchener's Parks team conducted public engagement to help shape the update of the Parks Master Plan, which included

engagement with the Active Transportation and Trails Committee. M. MacKinnon delivered a summary of the overall findings from the over 2,400 City of Kitchener residents, and the impact of the specific comments from the committee.

Eight major themes were identified through the public engagement process, which guide a total of 50 recommendations. The major themes are:

- **Equity** – Giving consideration to those who experience systemic barriers to participation
- **Environmental sustainability** – The importance of protecting, maintaining, and expanding open spaces, natural spaces and enacting climate mitigation measures
- **Accessibility** – Barrier-free access to park spaces, trails and features
- **Safety** – Feeling safe in parks during the day and night
- **Inclusion** – Feeling welcome in parks through access to park spaces and amenities
- **Information** – Sharing information about city parks and open spaces and creating learning opportunities within park spaces
- **Health and wellbeing** – Recognizing the physical, social, and mental health benefits of parks
- **Partnerships** – Developing thoughtful relationships and ongoing engagement with community members to create parks that reflect the needs and wants of residents

During engagement, the ATTAC committee commented that activities should continue through the winter at all parks and that more skating infrastructure would be valued. Based on this feedback, a refrigerated skating area is included as one of the 50 recommendations. There is also a 'change the way we play' policy being proposed that considers winter use in parks. Finally, year-round maintenance of trails is being recommended, which includes a recommendation that all new park developments have asphalt and concrete path surfaces. They are also recommending that paving and maintaining the Walter Bean Trail becomes a priority.

Other recommendations that have been made based on comments from this committee include prioritizing parkland as a use for city-owned properties, growing the urban tree canopy, and rethinking where recreation can happen, such as cemeteries, laneways and consideration for recreational uses on the tops of parking garages.

M. Bells asked if the City of Kitchener is considering how heat waste from the refrigeration system could be used to heat another building. There is no consideration at this time, but that comment will be passed on.

G. Piccini asked what kind of uses are being considered on the tops of parking garages. That has not been decided at this time but could include turf. Parks can return for updates. B. Forwell suggests that community gardens could be considered as a use.

J. Broschek asked if the survey showed that people felt parks are prioritized in suburban areas, and that there is not enough green space in central Kitchener. G. Piccini mentioned that Cherry Park is a big green space in the central area, but could be better utilized to accommodate different activities, such as seating areas. This is a consideration for the updates to Cherry Park, being led by stormwater, but that the Cherry Park festival needs to be accommodated, so a big open space is still needed. Seating is being prioritized near the new stormwater pond. Goign forward, Parks plans to do more local engagement as parks are being redesigned to consider local uses and needs.

Jorg - Did it come up in the survey that people feel parks are prioritized in suburban areas, and not enough greenspace in the central area

V. Hand identified that the Wilson Park courts are often being used for cricket, whenever no formal baseball games are happening and that cricket pitches should be a priority for that area as there appears to be a need. Parks is aware of the need for cricket pitches, the newly updated Westwood park includes cricket pitches and there are plans for new pitches at RBJ Schlegel Park.

B. Forwell asked if there was a consideration to include new parks in surface parking lots that are no longer at capacity due to lower rates of use for office space downtown. D. Kropf explained that the priority for those spaces is currently affordable housing. New developments are required to provide a parkland dedication. An example of this is the new transit hub trail which was included as part of the development of the parking garage at Bramms yards, the land would otherwise not have been available to the city to build a trail. Developers can also provide a cash in lieu payment for parks.

M. Bells asked if the City has a map that shows how far each location would be from park space in Kitchener. B. Forwell asked if there is a similar map for destination parks, or where people would go for what kind of activity. No map exists for either purpose.

M. Bells asked if the plan prioritizes secure bike parking for sports fields. One of the goals for the Master Plan is to increase bike parking and to be more intentional about having bike parking at every park. M. Bells mentioned that a standard layout for sports fields, such as a baseball diamond, could include how much bike parking is needed and where to put it.

#### 4.2 Summary of World Trails Conference

L. Christensen gave a presentation summarizing learnings from the World Trails Conference which took place in Ottawa in October. L. Christensen presented on three different trails, the Niagara Geopark Trail Network, the Chilkoot Trail which runs 50km from BC to Alaska, and the South West Coast Path in the UK.

L. Christensen also summarized a presentation by Julie Sawchuk on improving the accessibility of trails. She spoke about the Guelph 2 Goderich (G2G) trail and the Hays Tract and the work that has been done to share information and make targeted improvements that make trails more welcoming to people of all ability levels.

L. Christensen also spoke about the Rainbow Routes Association, and the South West Coast Path volunteers and the different initiatives that these groups take to support the trails, such as the Couch to Coast group to help people 55+ get active.

#### 4.3 Complete Streets Update

D. Kropf gave an update on the Complete Streets projects, reporting back on the comments made by the Active Transportation and Trails Committee.

**Broadview Av** - All of comments from ATTAC are being met except widening sidewalk to 1.8m due to retaining walls and hydro poles, which are very expensive to move. The crossing at Weber, will have an increased turning radius resulting in a narrower crossing for pedestrians. However, the crossing on the south side of Weber, in front of the Freshco parking lot, will still need to accommodate large delivery trucks, so it will be wider than the north side.

**Connaught St.** - Staff are proposing a multi-use trail (MUT) on one side with a sidewalk on the other. Sidewalk and cycle tracks would conflict with a number of trees and hydro poles. The proposed cross section still has conflicts with hydro poles, but only on one side of the road. The MUT is on the same side as the school providing a direct cycling connection, and also connects with the trail to the park.

**Olympic Dr.** - The committee requested wider sidewalks. Widening sidewalks to 1.8m would threaten a number of mature trees. Since it is not a main through-fare, the decision made to preserve tree canopy.

**Westwood Dr.** - The committee requested that there be bike infrastructure to connect to facilities on Glasgow Street. Traffic is just over the requirement for a neighbourhood bikeway. Adding a bike lane would have an impact to trees and hydro poles. Additionally, as this is a bus route, lane width requirements would mean that there would be no room for parking on Westwood with the available right-of-way if bike lanes were added.

**Chapel, Melrose, Sheridan** - Staff have determined that the traffic volume on these streets is appropriate for a neighbourhood bikeway. Traffic calming will be implemented to increase safety. Wider sidewalks are also planned for this area.

G. Piccini mentioned that East Ave is drastically changed due to continuous sidewalks and asked if the treatment will be on both sides of East St. D. Kropf confirmed that if you are crossing East Street, you will have to go up and over the continuous sidewalk twice as it will be on both sides of the street.

**Johnston & Patrick Street** - Staff are proposing sidewalk on one-side due to right-of-way constraints as well as the presence of small-scale manufacturing on one side that result in lower sidewalk use, and also would be negatively impacted by any land acquisition. Getting land would have been difficult and could have impact on businesses. The committee had suggested a path connecting Breithaupt Street to Johnston Street. That land is not owned by the City, and that level of land acquisition is outside the scope of a road reconstruction and would only be considered as a long-term strategy.

**Wellington St** - This project will be impacted by the Province's proposed Bill 212 - Reducing Gridlock as the original plan was to remove motor vehicle lanes. Sidewalks and cycle tracks can fit on both sides even if 4 lanes are kept along the corridor, except at the unused rail bridge which will need to be dismantled in order to fit the active transportation infrastructure and keep the existing vehicle lanes. Traffic studies support removal of a vehicle lane in each direction, however proximity to the highway may impact this decision at the provincial level. Staff are prioritizing the implementation of this project for next year and will plan to keep 4 vehicle lanes to remove project risk. Staff will also be speaking to the Region about a protected intersection as they move forward with reconstruction of Lancaster Street.

M. Bells asked if the City is looking at comparing the cost of acquiring the land for the parallel route connecting Breithaupt and Joseph St and the cost of

dismantling the rail bridge. D. Kropf explained that this would need to go through the Real Estate department.

G. Piccini stated that speed is a major issue in this corridor and asked if the road is staying at four lanes, whether the lanes would be narrowed. D. Kropf explained that the lanes would be narrowed, however if the road stays at four lanes, narrowing will have a limited impact on traffic calming.

B. Forwell asked if it would make sense to delay this project until there is more information or further changes to the law at the provincial level so that a road diet can be done which would allow more opportunities for cost savings and for implementation of the most appropriate cross section. Staff do not recommend delaying the project as this would only result in a road diet between Lancaster Street and Spring Valley Road. Additionally, longer-term changes may be required in this corridor due to any provincial changes to Highway 7.

**Carlton, Metzloff, Montrose** - The committee requested an upgrade to the trail connecting the Henry Sturm trail. This path is not owned by City so would not be considered as part of reconstruction as it would require land-acquisition. Future development of the property would probably consider formalizing that trail connection. This project will include narrowed lanes and 1.8 sidewalk. It is not clear at this time whether more trees will be included in this design, as plantings are not decided until after 90% design is complete. Based on the widened boulevards, it is likely that the final design will include more trees.

**King Street** - ATTAC has previously commented that the pedestrian experience in this area is currently poor. This design is another one that would be impacted by the proposed Bill 212. There are currently 3 lanes on this section and in order to implement sidewalk and cycle track, that centre turn lane would need to be removed at the mid-block. Turn lanes would be retained at intersections, where the sidewalk and cycle track would be curb-face however this is not possible through the mid-block due to comfort and feelings of safety, as well as winter snow maintenance. Staff are proposing that this project be delayed in order to ensure that the desired cross-section can be achieved.

G. Piccini asked if it is possible to extend this project to Pandora, in order to connect to the Duke Street bike lanes. D. Kropf clarified that it is not possible to complete the connection as part of this reconstruction as there is not enough space without major work being done, but that a connection can be part of a long-term plan.

#### **4.4 Budget Update**

Earlier today, the City launched a survey for residents to provide input on the 2025 budget. The City is looking for feedback on strategic investments made in 2024 to advance priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. This includes feedback on the Downtown Cycling Grid. The timeline for engagement on the budget makes it difficult for ATTAC to provide input as a committee. Members are encouraged to take the survey as an individual. Anyone who is interested can attend the Public Input Night which is happening November 19th. Delegations must be registered at least 2 hours in advance.

#### **4.5 Safety Zones**

V. Hand led a discussion on the recent activities related to the Region's Automated Speed Enforcement Program. ATTAC has previously submitted comments on changing the speed limits in school zones.

The Committee is disappointed that the City of Kitchener is not sufficiently participating in the Automatic Speed Enforcement program which is an important piece of Vision Zero Strategy and the Strategic Plan. The committee remains committed to the goals of Vision Zero.

#### **4.6 Discussion of Bill 212 - Reducing Gridlock**

V. Hand led a discussion on the Province's proposed Bill 212 - Reducing Gridlock, Saving you Time. This item was recently discussed at the Joint Regional Active Transportation Committee meeting. Delegations can be made to the province next week, members can sign up as individuals to delegate. Comments can also be submitted until November 20th online. Staff will share notes from the Joint regional Committee meeting and the link with members, for anyone who is interested in commenting as individuals.

### **5. Information Items**

#### **5.1 Subcommittee Review**

V. Hand led a discussion on the subcommittees, asking each subcommittee to be sure to prepare an end of term report that can be shared with the new committee members next year.

M. Bells delivered a presentation as part of the Data subcommittee on 'Open Data exploration on Active Transportation' with findings from the counter data available on the open data portal. The data being used in the presentation ends in 2022. Staff will look into why the data is not being updated quarterly.

M. Bells is also interested in traffic volume data and not sure why speed is not reported on the open data platform. Staff confirm there is no reason they are aware of as to why that information wouldn't be available.

## **5.2 Staff Updates**

A. Carlyle delivered updates to the committee on the process for selecting the new committee. Five local organizations are involved in making recommendations and the final recommendation for committee members will go to Council in November.

A. Carlyle delivered a summary of discussions at the Joint Regional Committee Meeting. Notes from this meeting will be shared with the committee once they are complete.

A. Carlyle updated the committee on the extension of the provincial pilot for scooters. The Region of Waterloo has indicated their support for continuing the shared micromobility program with Neuron, and Kitchener staff are looking to do the same.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:17p.m.

A. Carlyle

Committee Administrator