



PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES

Staff Report

REPORT NO: PFRS 2022-026

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sandy Jackson, Director Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

PREPARED BY: Sandy Jackson, Director Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

REVIEWED BY: Sharon Chambers, CAO

DATE: June 27, 2022

SUBJECT: Nith River Promenade Final Design

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT staff be directed to proceed with tendering the construction of the Nith River Promenade based on the updated final design included within Report PFRS 2022-026.

SUMMARY:

This report seeks Council direction to proceed with issuing a tender for construction of the Nith River Promenade improvements based on the public consultation and updated drawings included in this report.

BACKGROUND:

Staff report PFRS 2022-018, Nith River Promenade Concept Design included the following recommendations that were supported by Council:

THAT the 90% complete concept design prepared by WSP Global Inc. (WSP) be approved in principle; and further

THAT staff be directed to proceed with public consultation on the concept design including an online review and comment opportunity on the Township website, and a review opportunity by the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee, the New Hamburg Board of Trade, the Wilmot Trails Advisory Committee, and neighbouring businesses; and

THAT staff be directed to bring the 100% design drawings back to Council for approval while incorporating consultation feedback where possible, prior to tendering the project for construction.

Two (2) grants have been received to assist with funding this important downtown core project including the Rural Economic Development fund and the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF). Staff have been reporting back to these funders on the progress of the project.

The Grand River Conservation Authority provided input into the design and guidance with respect to the impacts on the dam structure and the Nith River. The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) provided input into the design and guidance with respect to the impacts on the dam structure and the Nith River.

REPORT:

Staff have now completed the public consultation, including reviewing the design with key community organizations and businesses, and an online public engagement. This report presents updated 100% final drawings and a summary of the feedback received.

Public Consultation Summary:

To ensure key community partners and the general public had an opportunity to provide feedback on the concept design, staff issued e-mails to local businesses in the area of the proposed construction, as well as to the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC), the Wilmot Horticultural Society, Let's Tree Wilmot, the New Hamburg Board of Trade, the Wilmot Trails Advisory Committee, and the Wilmot Family Resource Centre for Indigenous consultation.

Staff received twenty-three (23) responses through these methods with varying recommendations and comments. Staff also met on site with members of Let's Tree Wilmot to specifically review the proposed tree plan for the concept design.

A number of the suggestions related to flood mitigation, and dam related comments were provided back to the GRCA as these topics falls within their mandate and are not part of the project.

The most frequent public response was related to preservation of the mature trees and some grassy areas with natural shade to promote picnicking along the promenade. Although the trees affected by the concept design are aging and in need of replacement in the next 5-10 years, staff supported this and directed WSP to modify the plan to reduce the number of trees

that would be removed. Staff will also work on a replacement program for these mature trees to ensure natural shade as these aging trees reach end of life.

The second most common theme in the feedback related to improving the west bank of the river near the waterwheel by adding riprap¹ to address erosion and improve the path and lighting around the waterwheel. The addition of riprap on the west bank would require in-water work given riprap does not currently exist in that area. Given the additional time and costs associated with GRCA approval for in-water work, improvements along the west bank will be considered through a future capital project.

Other comments included adding bird houses, butterfly areas, improved waste and recycling bins, circular patterns for gathering, permeable surfaces to reduce asphalt and paving, improvements to the canoe/kayak launch area and consideration for solar lighting.

One further main theme was that the design does not promote access to the weirs that are often used by the public for crossing the river. The weirs are not intended as a walkway and are not accessible for all users, and due to the liability associated with encouraging access to the weirs, the GRCA, who own the weirs, have instructed staff to design the project accordingly.

Modifications to Concept Design:

As a result of the consultation feedback, the following changes were made to the design as presented in this report:

- eliminate the upper trail segment west of the upper gathering space to retain as many mature trees and green space as possible,
- information and planting details to include native species of trees to replace those being removed were provided by the consultant, and plantings will be done in conjunction with Let's Tree Wilmot and not part of this construction,
- realign the upper trail segment east of the upper gathering space to reduce grading on the accessible ramp from 5.2% to a 4.45% slope to ensure AODA compliance,
- addition of guardrails to the top edges of both headwalls (drain outlets) to better withstand the ice floes and protect trail users from potential fall hazards,
- design a designated garbage/recycling collection space,
- redesign the gathering spaces to include a circle design within the surfacing,
- realign the trail lighting to coincide with the revised trail layouts,
- improve access to the canoe/kayak launch area, and,
- other requests such as adding bird houses, butterfly areas etc., will be considered through future Parks operating budgets.

¹ Riprap is a permanent layer of large, angular stone, cobbles, or boulders typically used to armor, stabilize, and protect the soil surface against erosion and scour in areas of concentrated flow or wave energy.

WSP was also tasked with investigating potential solar lighting options which was determined to be nearly double the cost and incompatible with the current trail lighting fixture selection - however, the potential to look into solar transformers may still be an option for future consideration.

WSP was also tasked with looking into permeable surfacing for the gathering space/upper trail. Given the location of the trail in proximity to active flooding, a permeable surface such as stone dust or mulch were not considered to be viable options. Turf stone and comparable products were also not considered to provide a maintenance free and fully accessible surface. Other newer permeable paving technologies were considered; however, adequate testing has not yet been completed with respect to ensuring long term sustainability in a flood prone area. As a result, the trail design maintains the use of concrete and asphalt for the trail surfaces and gathering areas. The revised design does however include removal of the upper trail segment west of the upper gathering space, which reduces the overall impermeable area proposed by the project and retains a significant amount of greenspace.

With these changes which were based on the public consultation, staff are recommending approval of the 100% final design and proceeding with issuing the tender documents to complete the works.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Improvements to the trail, including increased accessibility, enhanced erosion control, and a design incorporating stakeholder engagement, furthers the Townships goals of Quality of Life, Environmental Protection and Community Engagement.

Implementation of the recommendations within the Trails Master Plan was identified as a specific strategic action under the Council approved Strategic Plan.

ACTIONS TOWARDS UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

Good Health and Well-Being, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Life Below Water.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The design of the project was funded in a 2021 as follows:

Funding Source	Amount
Rural Economic Development Grant	\$48,000
Infrastructure Reserve Fund – Facilities	\$112,000
Total	\$160,000

The approved 2022 Capital budget for the construction portion of this project is outlined below:

Funding Source	Amount
General Levy	\$35,000
Canada Community Revitalization Fund	\$200,000
Trust Funds – Trails	\$90,000
Total	\$325,000

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: Final Design

Appendix B: Summary of Public Consultation