



PARKS, FACILITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES

Staff Report

REPORT NO: PFRS 2022-18

TO: Council

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

PREPARED BY: Sandy Jackson, Director Parks, Facilities & Recreation Services
Andrew Martin, Manager of Planning and Economic Development

REVIEWED BY: Sharon Chambers, CAO

DATE: March 28, 2022

SUBJECT: Nith River Promenade Concept Design

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report PFRS 2022–18, Nith River Promenade Concept Design be received for information purposes, and further

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.

SUMMARY:

This report presents the 90% complete concept design for the Nith River Promenade and Trail Project as prepared by WSP with input from Township staff. Staff are seeking Council approval, in principle, of the concept design in order that staff can begin the public consultation process and seek feedback from key stakeholders and the general public prior to tendering construction.

BACKGROUND:

The Nith River Promenade and Trail in downtown New Hamburg span the banks of the Nith River between Kirkpatrick Park and the Hartman Bridge. The Nith River Promenade and Trail project will provide enhancements to this distinctive, centrally located, accessible amenity for community members and visitors to gather for private and community-led events, participate in recreational activities made possible by the surrounding parklands and adjoining Nith River, connect to the downtown core of New Hamburg, and enjoy the views of the New Hamburg Heritage Water Wheel and Nith River Reservoir Dam.

The area surrounding the Nith River Promenade and Trail endures annual flooding which increases erosion challenges along the promenade and required a thorough redesign in collaboration with the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA). The objective of the proposed promenade and trail layouts aim to improve the slope and construction of the pathways and features which do not currently meet all accessibility standards and improve access to the Nith River for water sports and pedestrian use which is expected to encourage patronage in the adjacent commercial district.

Rehabilitating the existing trail was included in past Ten-Year Capital Budget approvals, and in late 2019, the Township received conditional approval of funding towards “New Hamburg Core Enhancements – Nith River Pathway and Erosion Control” under the Rural Economic Development (RED) program. In addition, \$200,000 in grant funding under the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) has been applied for to fund a portion of the construction as per the current Ten-Year Capital Budget. Staff are continuing to work with the representatives from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) in the hopes to be successful in our application.

In 2021, WSP was awarded a contract for design of the Downtown New Hamburg Nith River Promenade Rehabilitation, as per their proposal received March 19, 2021.

REPORT:

This report includes a 90% concept design prepared by WSP for Council’s review and consideration attached as Appendix A. Intended to enhance the waterside experience along the Nith River, while providing an excellent view of the Waterwheel and reservoir features, this design includes the following features:

- Upgrading and relocating trail lighting on the East side of the river to enhance visibility for trail users after sundown, improve the aesthetics of the Nith River Promenade and Trail to compliment the adjoining Kirkpatrick Park, and provide durable light poles able to withstand the flooding and ice floes from the Nith River during high water and spring thaw events.
- Decreasing the slope of the ramps that connect the trail to the promenade to provide 5% grading or less and removing steps within the trail to increase accessibility.
- Enhancing the upper gathering platform to increase usability and views of the New Hamburg Heritage Water Wheel including relocating the existing electrical panel, redesigning the guardrails, and replacing the interlock with concrete.
- Resurfacing the Nith River Trail from the Cenotaph to the Kirkpatrick Park trail with new, 3m wide asphalt.
- Adding armour stone retaining walls to best utilize the naturalized areas to create 450mm deep planting beds with soil, mulch and coir mat for future garden beds and tree planting.
- Constructing a lower gathering area with armour stone seating to allow users the opportunity to rest and relax next to the river's edge.
- Raising and reconstructing the promenade pathway with concrete to significantly reduce ice damage and eliminate the depressions and voids caused by undermining.
- Installing subangular rip rap for slope stabilization, erosion control, and esthetics.
- Planting wildflower riverbank seed to deter geese, encourage pollinators and reduce landscape maintenance.

The GRCA has been continually engaged throughout the design stage and is supportive of the overall design concept. An application to the GRCA for their Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Permit is currently in process.

Staff is seeking Council approval, in principle, of the 90% design package and support to initiate public consultation regarding the proposed design. Included in the public consultation will be an online commenting period, input from the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Board of Trade, the Wilmot Trails Committee, and neighbouring businesses prior to finalizing the design. Once the design is updated to include the public and key stakeholder input, a final, 100% design package will be brought back to Council prior to tendering for construction.

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 |

*Subject to funding approval from FedDev Ontario

Once public consultation is complete, staff are anticipating communication regarding the grant application to determine if the funds will be available to proceed with project construction. Should there be inadequate funds available to complete the works, the Tender for this project may be delayed.

ATTACHMENTS:

Conceptual Design