

Wheeler Street Local Improvement Project

Public Survey: Input Summary (Appendix A)

October 2016 – Engineering Services, City of Whitehorse

The City's Engineering Services Department conducted a public survey to collect input on preliminary design preferences for the Wheeler Street Local Improvement Project. The survey was available in hard copy and online from August 30th to September 13th, 2016. The survey launched in association with two public meetings that occurred on August 30th and September 1st, 2016 at the Whitehorse Public Library. Approximately 50 properties would be affected by the proposed reconstruction project.

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Who completed the survey?

A total of 20 surveys were returned. Of the respondents, 16 identified as being property owners on Wheeler Street, 3 identified as being renters on Wheeler Street, and one person identified as a resident on Black Street. Most of the survey questions were optional. Some surveys were returned partially completed. The input received is summarized and generalized in this document. Some omissions have been made for confidentiality purposes.

Sidewalk preferences:

In addition to sidewalks proposed between 4th and 6th Avenue, the City is proposing to construct a sidewalk along the residential portion of Wheeler Street between 6th Avenue and the escarpment. Two survey questions asked about preferences relating to this sidewalk in terms of location (north or south side) and design (monolithic, meaning attached to the curb, or detached).

A small portion of respondents indicated they would like to see a sidewalk built on both sides. For those who selected a preferred side, all but one selected the side of the street opposite from where their

property/residence is located, suggesting that local circulation patterns may not have been a strong consideration. A clear preference by all but one respondent was indicated for a monolithic design.

Some respondents provided additional information on their selections. Concerns were raised relating to:

- Responsibility of shovelling snow if the sidewalk were located on their side of the street
- Potential loss of parking near Grace Community Church, if a sidewalk is built on the south side
- Loss of boulevard parking at the front of residences, if the sidewalk is a detached design
- Proximity of pedestrians to front yards and residences, if the sidewalk is detached
- Damage that would occur to landscaped areas, if the sidewalk is detached
- Lack of need for a sidewalk, given that there is access to the sidewalk on Black Street

Other comments provided:

- Select a sidewalk location and design that makes sense for the area
- A sidewalk on the south side would be consistent with other Downtown streets
- Parking and pathway connections are important
- Detached sidewalks would add significantly to the feel of the street
- Preference for a shared bike/pedestrian instead west of 7th Avenue

City Recommendation: The results to the questions were assessed and considered along with other factors including sun exposure, land uses, and pedestrian continuity to the three prominent destinations at the west end of Wheeler Street. These include the Black Street Stairs, the Grace Community Church, and the park. Engineering Services will include a proposal in the preliminary infrastructure design for a monolithic sidewalk on the north side of Wheeler Street from 6th Avenue to the escarpment.

Landscaping preferences:

The survey asked respondents to indicate their preference for landscaping varieties, which are intended to be placed at the intersection bulb-outs of Wheeler Street with 4th, 5th, and 6th Avenue.

Madame Lemoine Lilac and Princess Kay Plum Tree were indicated by an equal amount of respondents as preferred tree/tree-like options. The other alternative, Northwest Poplar, was preferred by one respondent.

Of the shrub options provided, Snow Pavement Rose was selected as being the preferred option. Little Lamb Hydrangea and Abbotswood Potentilla were the second most referred by an equal number of respondents. Other options included Ash Leaf False Spirea and Amber Jubilee Ninebark, which received a few selections.

The following additional information on landscaping was provided:

- No poplars – they leave a mess on vehicles
- Plant edible trees, like apple
- Plant herbs, like mint – would smell so good!
- Use non-deciduous plantings as well, such as Juniper, Mugo Pine, Creeping, or Dwarf Spruce
- Concern for property owner responsibility and maintenance of boulevard plantings

City Recommendation: The City will make efforts to incorporate the preferred planting options into the design of intersection bulb-outs and to integrate non-deciduous varieties for a design that will look good year-round. The final selection may be subject to the availability of the preferred varieties at the time of purchase and installation. Landscaping is typically installed in the final stages of construction.

Street name preference:

A survey question was used to gauge interest for having the section of Wheeler Street and Black Street that runs next to the escarpment recognized by a distinct name (other than Wheeler Street, Black Street, or 9th Avenue which is already in use in the Porter Creek neighbourhood).

The majority of respondents indicated that a name is not needed for this section of road. The following additional information was provided:

- Naming it will create confusion, especially if it is not named 9th Avenue
- No one would use the new street name – landmarks are more referred to in this area (e.g. Black Street stairs, park, church, etc.)
- If the City would like to name something in this area, name the park instead
- 9th Avenue is still a good option

Some naming suggestions were provided including: Penny Lane, Skookum Avenue, Back Street, Gate Street, Park Avenue, End Street, Climb Street, Stairs Street, and Cottonwood Lane. A suggestion was also made to name the street after the landscape architect who designed the adjacent park.

City Recommendation: The City will not pursue a distinct name for this portion of roadway. It will continue to be known as extensions of Wheeler Street and Black Street.

Additional information:

The questionnaire featured several open ended questions. The following additional information was submitted for consideration through responses to various questions.

Landscaping:

- Protect the Mayday tree in the 800 block (park) – it has special significance
- Protect the Lilac tree in front of the church

Drainage:

- There are drainage issues near the church – some on-street parking can't be used due to puddles

Traffic calming and parking:

- Traffic calming is needed
- Parking from 4th to 6th Avenue should be parallel, not angle
- Allow “breathing room” around parked cars – not like on Ogilvie Street (from 5th to 6th Avenue)
- Commercial parking spills onto 5th Avenue, Black Street, and Wheeler Street – City needs to enforce on-site/off-street parking regulations
- Ensure vehicles in 400 block are not parked so close to the corners – vehicles don't obey the yield at 5th Avenue and pedestrians can't see vehicles approaching, makes it unsafe
- Do not close off the street block from 4th to 5th Avenue
- Maybe Wheeler Street from 4th to 5th Avenue can be used for commercial parking and land on north side (next to cinema) can be used for a pocket park?

City Recommendation: The design of the bulb-out intersections proposed for the commercial block between 4th and 5th Avenue will aid in recessing parking away from street corners. This will help to improve the visibility of pedestrians crossing at intersections. In the interim before construction, the City will communicate parking concerns to commercial owners and will explore strategies to better manage parking-stay durations in this area.

Support/opposition:

A survey question was used to gauge preliminary support and/or opposition to the project. The results do not replace the property owner vote that will occur through the City's bylaw process. The majority (approximately 75%) of property owners who responded to this question indicated support for the project to advance to the next phase of the process.

Additional information provided by respondents included the following:

- Happy to get rid of dust, puddles, and potholes
- It is no longer cost effective to repair/maintain the street
- Timing is well suited to property development plans
- Improvements will make shovelling easier
- Damage has occurred to water and sewer services due to freezing and root damage, and they need repair

Information provided by respondents who expressed opposition to the project included:

- There are other streets in Downtown that should be prioritized for reconstruction over Wheeler Street, such as Alexander Street and Jarvis Street
- Why not pave 8th Avenue first?
- Not interested in paying the cost for these improvements
- Not looking forward to 12 hour/day construction work during the summer

City Recommendation: Engineering Services will recommend that City Council launch a formal property owner vote through the bylaw process to confirm local support and/or opposition for the project.