



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Environmental Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	July 12, 2018
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Mountainbrow Trail Feasibility Study (PW18053) (Wards 6, 7, 8 & 9)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 6, 7,8, 9
PREPARED BY:	Louise Thomassin (905) 546-2424, Extension 1303
SUBMITTED BY:	Craig Murdoch, B.Sc. Director Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the implementation strategy for the Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail identified in Report PW18053 be received;
- (b) That staff be directed to include the multi-use project initiatives for consideration in future capital budget processes, as part of larger projects or as stand-alone projects, within the implementation windows identified in the Mountainbrow Trail Feasibility Study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 30th of 2016 at the Public Works Committee (Report 16-010) an amended motion was carried to direct staff to undertake a Feasibility Study for a multi-use trail that would run along the top of the Niagara Escarpment and connect Wards 6, 7, 8 and 9.

In response to the amended motion, Landscape Architectural Services staff retained a consultant to prepare a feasibility study for the Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail to outline the recommended trail route, the implementation strategy and to provide high-level costing.

The purpose of Report PW18053 is to present the recommendations and to seek authorization to begin implementation planning for the Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail

according to the timelines, route plan and route details recommended in the Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study, see Appendix A attached to Report PW18053.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 8

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no immediate financial impacts of Report PW18053, as the recommendation is to refer the projects to future capital budget processes for consideration.

The Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail feasibility study estimates that the capital budget requirements to develop the multi-use trail will be approximately \$9 million over a 20+ year period. The estimate is a high-level order of magnitude cost for the construction of the multi-use trail and associated amenities where applicable. The estimate does not include design fees, permit fees or any road reconstruction work that may be required, but these can be expected to add an additional 12-15% on top of the cost of the projects.

Funds for the design and construction of the multi-use trail will need to be allocated during the capital budget process in the open space development capital program; roads program portfolio, alternative transportation portfolio or growth planning portfolio depending on the project initiative leader.

As initiatives are brought forward for consideration as part of the capital budget process, operating pressures will be identified on the detail sheets as part of the submission.

Staffing: No additional staffing is required as a result of the recommendations of Report PW18053. If additional FTE's are required to maintain the new trail, that will be identified as part of the capital budget submission.

Legal: Legal will be required to advise on and help prepare land agreements for any parcels of land not owned by the City that the recommended route proposes to traverse.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 2015, Mountainbrow Boulevard between Oakcrest Drive and Mohawk Road East in Ward 6 was reconstructed to upgrade sewer and watermain as part of the capital asset renewal program. Prior to the reconstruction, that portion of road had no facilities for cyclists or pedestrians. The multi-use trail running through the open space on the north

side of the road was proposed as a solution to respond to the affected community's desires to have a facility that offered a recreational amenity for multi-modal users.

The existing trail is a three (3) to four (4) meter wide asphalt pathway and includes benches, rest areas, a water fountain, road-side parallel parking, decorative fencing and solar pathway lighting. Since its installation, the multi-use trail has become a popular recreational asset and has garnered positive feedback from residents, City staff and Councillors.

The success of the multi-use trail in Ward 6 fostered a desire to connect the existing portion of trail to neighbouring wards while staying as close to the escarpment edge as possible to take advantage of views and to connect to the existing trail systems bisecting the Niagara Escarpment. The vision for the project was supported by Council through the approval of the direction to staff to undertake the study.

At Public Works Committee (Report 16-010) on May 30, 2016, the following amended motion was carried for the Plan for an Escarpment Multi-Use Path (Wards 6, 7, 8 and 9) (Item 9.1):

WHEREAS, the Niagara Escarpment, a designated UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and an internationally recognized landform that is the cornerstone of Ontario's Greenbelt; and

WHEREAS, the Niagara Escarpment segment traversing through the City of Hamilton, having unique views and vistas, is a treasured resource for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the City has the unique opportunity to develop a continuous pathway along the Escarpment Brow;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That staff be directed to report back to the Public Works Committee with a concept plan for a continuous multi-use path traversing from Ridge Road to Scenic Drive and that this plan include elements that enhance the unique views and vistas along this pathway;
- (b) That the concept plan identify features to be incorporated within the road right-of-way as well as the City's park system;
- (c) That the plan also identifies planning and development timelines along with cost estimates.

In the 2017 Capital Budget, the Landscape Architectural Services section allocated funds to retain a consultant to complete the Feasibility Study for the Mountainbrow

Multi-Use Trail and in June of 2017 IBI Group was retained. Their mandated scope was for the Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail was to:

- identify the recommended route, types of facilities and applicable amenities;
- provide a framework to guide the construction of the new trail segments and the reconstruction of existing trail infrastructure; and
- provide high level costing for each trail segment initiative.

The result is a recommended route that is approximately 25 km in length and spans Wards 6, 7, 8 and 9 to connect the Iroquoia Heights Conservation Area in Ward 8 to the Devil's Punch Bowl in Ward 9. The recommended route includes a mix of facility types such as sidewalk and on street separate bike lane; however, the predominant facility type is a multi-use pathway.

A multi-year implementation strategy was developed and the recommended route is partitioned into project initiatives. The prioritization and grouping of the project initiatives are based on the following factors:

Connectivity. Trail segments are scored higher if they provide a connection to one or more other trail segments and fill an existing gap.

Key Destinations

Trail segments are scored higher where key destinations, such as stair connections and major parks are located along the route.

Safety

Trail segments are scored higher if their implementation would remedy an existing safety concern.

Population and Employment Density; and Potential Demand

Trail segments are scored higher in areas where there is a higher population and where existing and forecasted employment areas are located.

Project Cost and Project Complexity

'Quick win' projects may proceed sooner than projects that would require significant capital funding and infrastructure work, such as road or bridge reconstruction in areas with limited available space.

Each project initiative outlines the anticipated level of effort, the timeline for implementation and identifies the staff group to lead its implementation. City staff identified to lead project initiatives were consulted to ensure implementation targets were in-line with existing capital budget forecasting, typical life-cycle replacement costs for that City Section and any pre-identified projects.

The Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study is a high-level plan and only the first step of the implementation process. Each project initiative will need to undertake additional public consultation, conduct relevant studies, acquire relevant permits and go through detailed design prior to tendering and construction. Further to this, as the timeline for implementation of the recommended route is 20+ years, it will be imperative that project initiatives slotted later in the implementation timeline be re-confirmed based on any new available information and discussions with stakeholders.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The following legislative requirements will affect all or some of the multi-use trail project initiatives:

Conservation Authorities Act: some of the trail initiatives do cross through Conservation Areas regulated by the Hamilton Conservation Authority and the legislation is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. As per the Conservation Authorities Act proposed development within these areas will require a permit.

Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act: some of the trail initiatives are within or located in proximity to the area of development control regulated by the Niagara Escarpment commission and the legislation is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. As per the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act proposed development within these areas will require a permit.

The following policy implications will affect all or some of the multi-use trail project initiatives:

City of Hamilton's Natural Heritage System: some of the trail initiatives are located within or in proximity to Core Areas and Linkages identified in the City of Hamilton's Official Plan – Natural Heritage System mapping. The identification of Core Areas and Linkages are based on requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement. The following may be required to develop within these areas: an Environmental Impact Statement, watershed studies, and natural areas inventories, Environmental Assessments, Linkage Assessment Report or other similar studies.

City of Hamilton's Cultural Heritage and Archaeology: each of the trail initiatives will require the project lead to confirm with the City's Cultural Heritage Planners to determine if the site requires an Archaeological Assessment. The City's Cultural Heritage and Archaeology policy takes its direction from the Provincial Policy Statement.

The above-mentioned policies and legislation will need to be verified with the authorities having jurisdiction to determine requirements for development at the time of implementation.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The following internal groups were consulted and are in support of the recommendations:

Ward 6 Councillor
Ward 7 Councillor
Ward 8 Councillor
Ward 9 Councillor
Natural Heritage Planning – Planning and Economic Development
Cultural Heritage Planning – Planning and Economic Development
Alternative Transportation – Planning and Economic Development
Infrastructure Planning – Planning and Economic Development
Growth Planning – Planning and Economic Development
Forestry and Horticulture – Public Works
Parks & Cemeteries – Public Works
Real Estate – Planning and Economic Development
Design Engineering – Public Works
Asset Management – Public Works
Healthy Environments – Public Health Services
Traffic Engineering – Corporate Assets and Strategic Planning
Information Technology – Corporate Services

The following external groups were consulted and are in support of the recommendations:

Hamilton Conservation Authority
Niagara Escarpment Commission
Hillfield Strathallan College
St-Joseph's Hospital
Infrastructure Ontario
Bruce Trail Conservancy – Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club
Hamilton Burlington Trails Council
Hamilton Naturalist Club
SoBi Hamilton
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
IBI Group

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The following provides the rationale for proceeding with the implementation of a continuous multi-use trail referred to as the “Mountainbrow Trail” that will run along the top of the Niagara Escarpment and connect four (4) wards:

The existing Mountainbrow Trail section is heavily used and its continuation will support the City’s and Province’s strategic plan to provide an environment that offers active living options to increase levels of physical activity.

Since its installation in 2015, the existing Mountainbrow trail that runs along the north edge of Mountainbrow Boulevard between Oakcrest Drive and Mohawk Road East has received positive feedback from residents, Councillors and City staff. The high levels of utilization and demand for similar facilities to be installed in connecting wards is evidence that trails located in strategic locations are successful and support the City’s and Province’s vision to support active lifestyles by providing the necessary infrastructure.

Some of the existing road sections and open space sections are aging and will require capital investment to renew infrastructure and address any safety, maintenance and accessibility concerns within the next 10-year capital budget forecast.

There are portions along the recommended Mountainbrow route where infrastructure renewal is planned within the 10-year capital budget forecast as part of on-going lifecycle replacements, particularly as it relates to road reconstruction projects. The inclusion of a multi-use path and additional amenities where appropriate into these road reconstruction projects would improve cost efficiencies while providing accessible, safe and attractive routes for trail users.

During the field assessments conducted for the Feasibility Study, sections along the Mountainbrow route were flagged where maintenance, accessibility and safety concerns would need to be addressed regardless of whether a new multi-use trail would be implemented or would not be implemented. As noted above, bundling project work improves cost efficiencies and the inclusion of an accessible facility will add value to the experience of the end user.

The implementation of a formalized trail will help protect the unique natural features along the recommended route, such as the Niagara Escarpment by keeping trail users along a designated path.

The recommended Mountainbrow route will run parallel, and at times through the Niagara Escarpment. The provision of a formalized route will deter trail users from creating new pathways and help prevent the degradation of the environment. The project initiatives further offer the opportunity to include environmental enhancement

measures where appropriate, such as erosion control measures to protect slope stability and plant native species and remove invasive species to increase the vegetative buffer and improve its integrity. Awareness of the natural environment through educational signage and interpretive panels can highlight the value of the environment and further foster a civic duty to protect the unique natural heritage of the Niagara Escarpment.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

The alternative is to not proceed with the recommended route outlined in the Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study, beyond the initiatives that are already identified in the Recreational Trails Master Plan and/or Cycling Master Plan.

This option is not recommended by staff as neither the Recreational Trails Master Plan nor the Cycling Master Plan has the provision for a continuous, connected route designed to take advantage of views and the natural heritage along the top of the escarpment. Further challenges to this alternative option include:

- the need to address requests from residents and stakeholders to provide an amenity like the existing portion of the Mountainbrow route located between Oakcrest Drive and Mohawk Road East;
- the need to address safety and accessibility concerns where pedestrian and/or cyclist facilities do not exist; and
- the need to address environmental degradation along the top of the escarpment where informal trail creation and usage exists.

The Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study offers a solution to address these requests and / or concerns over a phased implementation strategy that is weighted based on need, pre-identified infrastructure projects and economic and environmental constraints.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement & Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” – Mountainbrow Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study