



Staff Report

Operations – Capital Projects Division

Report To: COW-Operations_Planning_and_Development_Services
Meeting Date: October 29, 2024
Report Number: CSOPS.24.075
Title: Thornbury West Phase 1B Reconsideration
Prepared by: Michael Campbell, Senior Infrastructure Capital Project Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.24.075, entitled “Thornbury West Phase 1B Reconsideration”;

AND THAT Council direct Staff to advance the work on Louisa Street between Bruce Street and Elma Street with Road Cross-section 3 as described in Staff Report CSOPS.20.040;

AND THAT Council direct Staff to advance the work on the Louisa Street Parkette seating area using a sheet pile retaining wall to preserve the mature Town trees at the top of the slope that flanks 46 Bruce Street;

AND THAT Council direct Staff to advance the project with the 3.5m wide dedicated parking on the south side of Louisa Street as described in CSOPS.20.040 and later selected by Council in CSOPS.20.049.

B. Overview

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from Council to advance the project work after considering:

1. Option 3A as referenced in Staff Report [CSOPS.20.049](#) .
2. Eliminate parkette to preserve as many mature trees as possible.
3. Elimination of parking spaces in consultation with Louisa Street residents, local businesses and the BIA.
4. Include a comprehensive Downtown Thornbury Parking Strategy in a future budget, for Council consideration.

C. Background

Following a Staff study of reconstruction priorities in the older part of Thornbury entitled

Thornbury Road Infrastructure Project (TRIP), in 2016, the first project identified was Elma and Alice Streets. The timeline for the Preliminary Design is as follows:

- November 14, 2016, Preliminary Engineering awarded to WSP Canada for Elma and Alice Streets.
- April 3, 2017, Level of Service Workshop awarded to WSP for Elma and Alice.
- May 14, 2018, [CSPW.18.019](#) Level of Service Staff Report.
- May 28, 2018, Council Direction on CSPW.18.019.
- May 14, 2018, [CSPW.18.039](#) Elma and Alice Streets Discussion with Residents.
- May 28, 2018, Council Direction on CSPW.18.039.

With direction from Council on CSPW.18.039, Staff and WSP Canada were directed to adopt the Staff design recommendations and complete the Preliminary Engineering assignment. The Staff design recommendations were:

- Road Width: 8.5m
- Curb Type: Barrier Curb
- Sidewalk: 1.5m One Side of Road
- Street Trees: 15m to 18m On Center
- Streetlights: Add Cobra Head Lights to Existing Poles.

The final Preliminary Design Report was provided by WSP Canada on December 21, 2018.

The timeline for the Final Design and Project Management is as follows:

- May 14, 2019, Final Engineering and Project Management for Elma and Alice Streets awarded to Tatham Engineering.
- July 2019, PIC to present Tatham's understanding of WSP's Level of Service Workshops.
- October 7, 2019, [CSOPS.19.064](#) Elma and Alice Street Area Streetscape Report.
- October 21, 2019, Council direction on Elma and Alice Area Streetscape Report.

At this point the final design has reached the 30% stage and Council directs Staff to advance the Final Design with the level of service and design elements to be incorporated into Elma and Alice Street Area as follows:

- Correction/extension of private plumbing responsibility of property owners.
- Level of service includes storm sewers and storm laterals.
- 8.5m pavement width.
- 1.5m wide sidewalks.

- Sidewalks on both sides of the road.
- Re-design parking on Town land and church property by agreement.
- Mountable curbs.
- Mount standard cobra head fixtures on existing hydro poles.
- Replace street trees to achieve 16m spacing of specimen trees and remove miscellaneous private landscaping.

The change to mountable curbs was based on a deputation by a single individual. Similarly, sidewalks on both sides of the road were based on a deputation by a single individual. The inclusion of sidewalks on both sides of the street became a problem for some older houses that were constructed too close to the road. Two more staff reports were required to consider where sidewalks were to be constructed.

- October 21, 2019, [CSOPS.19.083](#) Follow-up on Sidewalks for Elma and Alice Streets.
- December 9, 2019, [CSOPS.19.088](#) Sidewalk Locations for Elma and Alice Streets Area Reconstruction.

With the dawning of the COVID pandemic, uncertainty grew in early 2020 as to how work would be possible. Tatham Engineering were engaged for the final design and project management of Elma & Alice Streets reconstruction as well as the preliminary engineering for Victoria & Louisa Streets reconstruction. Staff recommended that the preliminary engineering for Victoria & Louisa Streets be wrapped up and combine the two projects and tender the work in early 2021.

- June 2, 2020, [CSOPS.20.034](#) Combining Projects – Victoria St & Louisa St with Elma St & Alice Streets Reconstruction Projects.

In the summer of 2020, Staff produced three reports which provided design options for Elma & Alice Streets as well as Victoria & Louisa Streets. Of all the design options discussed the one pertinent to the reconsideration discussion was the Louisa Street cross-section. At the time the design was not as advanced as it is today. It was suggested by Staff that a retaining wall would be required to retain the existing street parking. Council was concerned with a retaining wall that would change the look of the street. We now know a small retaining wall for only a portion of the road will be required, most of the slope can be regraded to form the bed of an urban forest. The report discussed the tree loss due to the retaining wall, but it also suggested that there would be tree loss due to the installation of the sewer and the lateral regardless of the wall being constructed. We now know that virtually all the trees on the slope will be lost to the sanitary sewer and the multiple laterals that will service the homes on top of the slope.

- June 30, 2020, CSOPS.20.039 Elma Street and Alice Street Reconstruction Additional Design Options Report.
- August 11, 2020, [CSOPS.20.040](#) Victoria Street S. and Louisa Street W. Reconstruction Design Options.

- August 24, 2020, CSOPS.20.049 Victoria St. S. and Louisa St. W. Reconstruction Design Options Update.

Over the winter Tatham wrapped up the preliminary engineering for Victoria Street and Louisa Street as far as it could be advanced and held a Public Information Centre. Pertinent to the reconsideration discussion, the new look of Louisa Street was depicted in cross-sections and renderings showing the existing trees removed and the new plantings for the urban forest. Recently the author discussed the density of the slope planting. With planting trees and shrubs at 2m on center, we could see as many as 350 plants.

- February 23, 2021, [CSOPS.21.011](#) Public Information Centre for Victoria & Louisa Streets Preliminary Engineering

On December 16, 2021, the author and the Town's arborist and engineer met with the Tree Trust and their arborist. The trees on Louisa Street were becoming a concern to the Tree Trust. The project team realized that the project could be stalled by discussions regarding the trees so decided to split the project into Phase 1A and Phase 1B to avoid losing another construction season. Phase 1A was the less treed area of the project. Phase 1A was tendered early in 2022 but due to utility relocation delays work could not begin until July. The Phase 1A work could not be completed in 2022. For 2023 a portion of the Phase 1B project was added to the existing contract, Elma Street between Arthur Street and Louisa Street.

As the design evolved, an opportunity to enhance the Town was realized by the author. Parkettes could be constructed on a section of Beaver Street that no longer had purpose and along the slope in the Louisa Street ROW. A Public Information Centre was conducted to introduce the Parkettes and receive feedback on options for the Parkettes and their design.

- April 12, 2022, [CSOPS.22.036](#) Thornbury West Parkettes Public Information Centre.
- June 22, 2022, [CSOPS.22.050](#) Thornbury West Parkettes PIC Follow-up.

The Beaver Street Parkette was added to the Phase 1A Reconstruction. Some of the work within the parkette was part of the Beaver Street reconstruction funded by the General DC Fund thereby realizing savings for the parkette construction being funded by the Park DC Fund.

In late fall of 2023, in preparation for the 2024 construction, the trees in Thornbury West Phase 1B that need to be removed were posted with signs. This is a normal practice of the Town to mark trees in some fashion if they are planned to be removed. There was a significant reaction to posting the trees that would need to be removed to complete the approved works.

Following a few deputations and concerns expressed by some residents, Councillor

Hope, seconded by Councillor Porter, provided a motion to reconsider its previous direction to Staff regarding Thornbury West Phase 1 as follows:

WEHEREAS the Town of The Blue Mountains Council agreed unanimously on its direction to proceed on August 24, 2020, in response to its receipt of Staff Report CSOPS.20.049 entitled “Victoria Street South and Louisa Street South and Louisa Street West Reconstruction Design Options Update”;

AND WHEREAS Council also agreed unanimously on its direction to proceed with the Louisa Street Parkette Concept 1 on July 4, 2022, in response to its receipt of Staff Report CSOPS.22.050 entitled “Thornbury West Parkettes PIC Follow-up”;

BE IT KNOWN that this decision was made within the context of a real concern for the economic welfare of downtown Thornbury retailers during the early days of the Declared State of Emergency brought on by the Covid virus and the need for more parking spaces for potential customers, and before additional parking was made available on Arthur Street;

AND BE IT KNOWN that attitudes toward the valuing of green infrastructure, such as trees, have further evolved during the last 3 years of increased climate disruptions around the world since the date of this decision;

NOW THEREFORE Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains hereby reconsiders those two motions and its direction to staff.

This motion to reconsider was passed unanimously on Monday December 18, 2023.

When the motion to reconsider passed Deputy Mayor Bordignon, seconded by Councillor Maxwell, provided a motion as follows:

THAT, in response to the December 18, 2023, Notice of Motion to reconsider the direction of Staff Report CSOPS.20.049 entitled “Victoria Street South and Louisa Street West Reconstruction Design Options Update” and Staff Report CSOPS.22.050 entitled “Thornbury West Parkette PIC Follow-up”, Council direct staff to provide a staff Report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting for Council consideration that will include opportunities for the construction, including:

- 1. Option 3A as referenced in Staff report CSOPS.20.049**
- 2. Eliminate parkette to preserve as many mature trees as possible**
- 3. Elimination of parking spaces in consultation with Louisa Street residents, local businesses and the BIA**
- 4. Include a comprehensive downtown Thornbury Parking Strategy in the 2024 Draft Budget, for Council consideration.**

This motion was passed unanimously on Monday December 18, 2023.

D. Analysis

Following December 18, 2023, staff have met with the Thornbury BIA, downtown businesses and residents on Louisa Street that were available during three walks through the area. Staff have also walked through Louisa Street, Elma Street, and Alice Street with Councillors in small groups to discuss details of the upcoming project.

As the design has developed over the past three years, the impact of the construction is now better understood by the project team.

Also, the Louisa Street Parkette which includes a biodiverse urban forest between Bruce Street and Elma Street and a seating area near Bruce Street to augment downtown Thornbury. The Parkette was selected through a process of significant public engagement that would likely have to be repeated if direction to change the parkette were to be considered by Council.

Option 3A as referenced in Staff Report CSOPS.20.049

CSOPS.20.049 and CSOPS.20.040 discussed design options for Victoria and Louisa Streets. For this discussion we will discuss the design options for Louisa Street between Bruce Street and Elma Street. This is a difficult section of road to design due to the slope which impinges into the road cross section by almost half of the right-of-way width.

CSOPS.20.040 explored numerous road cross sections with different traffic flow patterns and dedicated parking options. At the time staff reported that regardless of the road cross section selected, a retaining wall would be required the length of road section.

Council requested staff consider an option for the road cross section that was discussed in CSOPS.20.049. Council's concern at the time was a retaining wall suggested as required in CSOPS.20.040 might change the street's appearance. There were no concerns at this time with the tree loss. The report suggests that elimination of the retaining wall would reduce tree loss directly, but trees would still be lost due to the replacement and correction of mains and services. Also, the regrading of the slope to reduce the retaining walls required would result in loss of all the existing trees.

Council has now asked staff to reconsider the road cross section without the parking or the required (at that time of the design development) retaining wall. Staff understand that Council believes the elimination of these elements of the design would result in preservation of the existing trees. For the following discussion the slope being considered is west of the Louisa Street driveway to 46 Bruce Street through to Elma Street.

The Arborist Report lists 15 trees on the slope. There are also some shrubs and small trees that are typically not listed in the report, it is common that trees smaller than 50mm caliper are not listed. Of the 15 trees, three are Black Locust and of the minor

trees/shrubs at least 10 are Black Locust. There are also some seedlings that appear to be Black Locust and a small tree on private property may be the same. Black Locust is an invasive species according to the Ontario Invasive Plant Council of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Their Best Management Practice is to control (eradicate) an infestation before it becomes locally established. From the observation of the trees, minor trees and seedlings it appears the trees are becoming locally established.

As for the other 12 trees listed in the report, three are in poor condition, six are in fair condition, and three are in good condition. One of the large maples, tree #103 along the toe of the slope was picked up in the initial survey for the report, it was in poor condition, but it blew down and was removed from the report before it was finalized. Of the 12 trees, any along the toe of slope will be lost to the sanitary sewer installation. These trees will also be lost to the lateral installations. There is one tree that might not be lost directly to lateral installations, it is tree #95, a Sugar Maple that is in very poor condition and should be removed due to its condition.

The properties on top of the slope have been oddly serviced in the past and many corrections to the lateral locations are required. For example, 27 Louisa Street and 25 and 27 Elma Street are serviced by one sanitary lateral out to Elma Street. 27 Louisa Street and 25 Elma Street have water laterals that come off Elma Street at Lorne Street and cross private property. 23 and 25 Louisa Street have combined water and sanitary laterals that need to separate. In addition to the new water and sanitary lateral locations, new storm water laterals will need to be installed.

As an example of what effect the construction on Louisa Street will have on the trees we can look to Elma and Alice Street and see the effect of recent construction. At 45 and 47 Elma Street, there are three mature maples that are in the boulevard but may be boundary trees. 45 Elma Street experienced a sanitary drain failure in 2022 and had to dig up and replace their building drain. The work disturbed the roots of the middle of the three trees, and the health of this tree has declined rapidly to be essentially dead today.

On Alice Street between Elma Street and Park Lane 3 of the 5 houses have been reconstructed or extensively renovated. During these renovations the tree protection zones may not have been adhered to with material stored over the roots. The extent of excavations around the trees is not known but likely less than the disturbance expected on Louisa Street. Of the 9 mature trees in front of these houses 3 have been lost. The replacement of the laterals will likely see 4 more trees lost.

From these examples on Elma and Alice Streets, construction has an impact on trees. Attachment #2 shows the location of the mains and the laterals and impact zone of the construction.

With the trees lost to the installation of the mains and the laterals Staff have suggested the slope be regraded and the retaining walls at the top of the slope be removed. As the road and parking facility design has matured the consultant now reports that the installation of the parking facility can be accomplished with a greatly reduced retaining

wall which was the main concern of Council in 2020 when they considered Option 3A for the road cross-section.

Eliminate parkette to preserve as many mature trees as possible

Through an extensive public consultation process the concept of parkettes on Beaver Street and Louisa Street were presented to the public.

The public selected one of the options for a parkette on Beaver Street which has since been constructed. When onsite the author has engaged people strolling through the parkette to ask their thoughts on the facility. While not a proper poll, all the people using the parkette have been very positive and appreciate it being developed.

The parkette on Louisa Street has two components separated by the entrance to 46 Bruce Street on Louisa Street approximately 50m west of the Bruce Street centerline. East of the entrance a seating area and planting beds are planned. West of the entrance the trees will be lost to the construction of the sanitary sewer main and the multiple laterals. The failing retaining walls at the top of the slope can be removed and the entire slope regraded to prepare for planting an urban forest with hundreds of trees.

The concept for the parkette came from staff as the design was advancing. The parking on Louisa Street will be left wheel to curb and to avoid conflicts with cars entering Louisa Street with cars pulling out of parking stalls it was proposed that parking would start west of the entrance. Also, with the trees and retaining wall removed and the slope regraded the normal street tree planting would be difficult due to the slope. Staff developed the parkette concept with a seating area in the space left vacant east of the entrance and a dense planting of trees on the slope west of the entrance. The Town's Arborist suggested the tree should be small enough to take root without the risk of sliding down the slope. The slope planting would include a mixture of trees, shrubs, and understory to produce a biodiverse urban forest.

In addition to planting the urban forest that will take some time to mature the project has the old Beaver Street right-of-way between Louisa Street and the new entrance to the LCBO/Foodland site that could be planted with mature trees from the Town's nursery and golf course. This would be like the urban forest that was approved by Council on the Peel Street North project. It would be a further offset to the trees lost to the water main and sewer main lines and the associated laterals.

The first concept of the seating area would see the toe of the slope pushed back to create the space for the facility which would require a retaining wall. At first this was expected to be a small gravity wall with no impact on the Town trees at the top of the slope. In the fall of 2023 when the trees were marked for removal the consultant reported that a cantilever wall was proposed that would mean a much larger excavation and the trees at the top of the hill would be lost. Staff pointed out that they should have considered a sheet pile wall to preserve the trees. Following the motion to reconsider in the spring of 2024 the consultant confirmed that a sheet pile wall could be used to preserve the trees.

There is one small basswood on the slope that would be lost to the seating area, but this is likely not one of the mature trees that the reconsideration spoke to.

Considering the complete parkette, the seating area can be constructed without affecting the mature Town trees at the top of the slope; and planting the slope will replace the trees lost to the construction of the mains and laterals.

While not directly related to the parkette and the loss of trees, there have been some concerns about the safety of having a seating area on the side of a street. This seating area would not be much different than street side restaurant seating. The design will include a speed table at the Bruce Street/Louisa Street intersection where pedestrians cross Louisa Street on the west side of Bruce Street. This will become the entrance into Louisa Street as it will be one-way from Bruce Street to Elma Street. The curb in front of the seating area will be barrier curb. A speed table will be installed for the pedestrian crossing of Louisa at Bruce Street and Knock-down signs will be installed in front of the seating area for further traffic calming. The speed limit could be reduced to match Bruce Street at 40KPH, or possibly 30KPH, currently the speed limit is not posted so by default the speed limit is 50KPH.

Elimination of Parking on Louisa Street in consultation with Louisa Street residents, local businesses and the Thornbury BIA

Staff met with the BIA on February 7, 2024, and following that meeting walked the Bruce Street business area and Louisa Street to meet with business owners and residents to explain the construction project and seek their thoughts on eliminating the parking facility on Louisa Street.

A summary of the comments is provided in Attachment #1.

The BIA is in support of retaining parking on Louisa Street for downtown businesses but not if it would cause mature tree removal. Staff asked the downtown businesses to provide written comments for the record. Discussions with the businesses revealed most businesses were in favour of the parking for their customers. However, the written responses from the businesses were not as numerous as those businesses staff spoke with. It may be that the businesses did not want to go on record for the report due concerns of a backlash on their businesses.

The residents were not unanimously in favour of the parking, but it seems to be the majority did want a parking facility. Residents have limited parking in their driveways and when entertaining they need the parking for guests as is common on other streets in Town. One resident suggested the residents be provided parking passes for guests if the spaces become paid spaces.

There are reports of the existing Louisa Street parking space being heavily used. On Canada Day this year the street was lined with cars on both sides. On a typical weekday in the summer the parking in downtown Thornbury is well used.

The requested comprehensive downtown Thornbury Parking Strategy was not included in the 2024 Budget, the request came late in the budget process, and it could not be included. The comprehensive downtown Thornbury parking strategy will be included in a future budget.

Currently there are eight main parking areas in downtown Thornbury:

- Hester Street Parking Facility - 46 spaces (down from 54 in design)
- Bruce Street South - 21 spaces
- Bruce Street North - 24 spaces
- Louisa Street East - 7 spaces
- Post Office Parking Lot - 62 spaces
- Arthur Street Parking Lot - 52 spaces
- North of Post Office Parking Lot off King Street - possibly 45 spaces
- Louisa Street West - possibly 25 spaces.

The Hester Street parking facility has lost a few spaces due to spaces reserved for rental properties and lost to an outside dining area.

The Post Office parking lot is on land owned by the Town and a company. The Town portion of the parking lot is the west half of the lot. There has been a suggestion that the company may be interested in developing the land which would result in the loss of a portion of the existing parking spaces.

The gravel parking lot north of the Post Office is privately held and presumably could be developed in the future.

There are also a few informal gravel or dirt areas where people regularly park.

In total there are approximately 290 parking spaces in the vicinity of downtown Thornbury. The parking on Louisa Street West represents approximately 8.6% of the downtown parking facility. This summer on most weekdays the parking was well used, and it is reported as heavily used on weekends. As the Town grows parking in Thornbury should continue to grow. The loss of parking on Louisa Street is not recommended by staff. It would be difficult to replace the parking on Louisa Street at some point in the future and the cost would likely be far greater than retaining the parking facility.

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommend that Council direct Staff to advance the project using road cross-section Option 3 as described in CSOPS.20.040 and later selected by Council in CSOPS.20.049. Road Cross-section Option 3 includes a 6m one-way road surface with 3.5m wide parallel parking between Bruce Street and Elma Street.

Staff recommend that Council direct Staff to advance the project with the parkette as envisioned in CSOPS.22.050 "Thornbury West Parkettes PIC Follow-up". The seating area of the parkette can be constructed using a sheet pile retaining wall to preserve the

mature Town trees at the top of the slope and the planting of a biodiverse urban forest will replace the existing trees that will be lost to the reconstruction of the inground works.

Staff recommend that Council direct Staff to advance the project with the 3.5m wide dedicated parking on the south side of Louisa Street as described in CSOPS.20.040 and later selected by Council in CSOPS.20.049.

Staff will include a comprehensive Downtown Thornbury Parking Strategy in a future budget for Council consideration.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

Creation of urban forests on the Louisa Street slope and the closed section of Beaver Street will increase the urban forest canopy and offset trees that will be lost to construction in Thornbury.

G. Financial Impacts

The total budget for Thornbury West Phase 1A & B Reconstruction was \$18.9M and the funding for this amount is as follows:

- \$915,000 Parks and Recreation Development Charges;
- \$1,848,300 IPW Asset Replacement Reserve Fund;
- \$2,249,400 Roads and Related Development Charges;
- \$2,728,500 Wastewater Asset Replacement Reserve Fund;

- \$2,906,400 Water Asset Replacement Reserve Fund; and
- \$8,206,800 Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) Grant.

To date Phase 1A and portions of Phase 1B have been completed and the total spent is \$8.7M, leaving \$10.1M available. Once final design is complete the final construction cost estimates will be understood.

H. In Consultation With

Jason Petznick, Communications Coordinator

Jim McCannell, Manager of Roads and Drainage

Ryan Gibbons, Manager of Community Services

Monica Quinlan, Director of Corporate and IT Services / Treasurer.

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of Public Information Centers which took place on March 11, 2021, December 1, 2021 and April 27, 2022. Those who provided comments at the Public Meeting and/or Public Information Centre, including anyone who has asked to receive notice regarding this matter, has been provided notice of this Staff Report. Any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Michael Campbell, Senior Infrastructure Capital Project Coordinator cc@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. Summary of Comments
2. Construction Impacts on Louisa Street Trees
3. Louisa Street Option Comparison Table

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Campbell
Construction Coordinator

Pruthvi Desai
Manager of Capital Projects

Alan Pacheco
Director of Operations

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CSOPS.24.075 Thornbury West Phase 1B Reconsideration.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 Summary of Comments.pdf - Attachment 2 Construction Impacts on Louisa Street Trees.pdf - Attachment 3 Louisa Street Options Comparison Table.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Oct 18, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature found

Pruthvi Desai - Oct 18, 2024 - 11:19 AM

Alan Pacheco - Oct 18, 2024 - 11:42 AM