

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path - WWH

Date Prepared: March 17, 2021

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Councillor Ian Froude, Transportation and Regulatory Services & Sustainability

Ward: Ward 4

Decision/Direction Required: An overview of the stakeholder and public feedback received to date is provided with a technical memo on surface material to support Council in providing the required direction on design choices such as surface material for Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Several key areas of the Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path require direction from council in order to proceed with the detailed design. The public engagement process has now concluded and feedback received has informed the discussion from staff provided below for these key areas.

Attached are several supporting documents:

- Surface Material Technical Memo
- Surface Material Summary Matrix
- What We Heard – Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path

Surface Material

The attached Surface Material Technical Memo provides a comparison of five (5) surface material options: traditional granular material, two (2) granular products with stabilization systems, traditional asphalt, and concrete.

Accessibility: The planned route of Kelly's Brook Shared Use Path is one of the flattest trail routes in the city, presenting greater opportunity to accommodate a wide range of ages and abilities of users including people with mobility challenges or invisible disabilities. Asphalt and concrete are the only truly accessible trail surface materials. Although some wheelchairs and mobility aids work on the granular surface options, many do not. The vast majority of people engaged agreed that the upgraded trail should be accessible for people with mobility challenges and disabilities. Over several years the City's Inclusion Advisory Committee and Universal Design Working Group strongly support the recommendation for an accessible surface treatment. A discussion on specific trail material is scheduled for March 23, 2021 and a verbal update on the conclusions of this discussion will be provided during Committee of the Whole on March 24, 2021.

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An opportunity for a continuous pathway surface: The existing links of walking trail that will be connected to form the Kelly's Brook Shared Use Path are predominantly granular with concrete sidewalks along roadways. Applying a continuous asphalt surface along the length of the shared-use path would help clearly denote the pathway direction at intersections and junctions. It would also clearly differentiate the shared-use path, which is open for cycling, from surrounding walking trails and sidewalks where cycling is prohibited. This distinction will help ease concerns of existing trail users about people misusing the walking trails.

Public preference: Shared-use path surface material was a significant piece of public engagement. There is a full-page summary of this topic on page 7 of the attached What We Heard report. Public preference was varied, mixed and often unclear. Although there was a preference for a granular surface aesthetic from the 89 workshop participants, the survey showed a strong preference for the functionality of a smooth, accessible surface when the material was not specified. The majority of the 822 survey respondents wanted a surface material that would accommodate as many types of human-powered uses as possible. The three granular surface treatments have limitations for walkers and some wheelchair users and do not support small wheeled devices. Asphalt and concrete surfaces promote a wide range of uses for all ages and abilities. Considering all other material characteristics that participants identified as the most important—year round use, usability, drainage and runoff, performance and durability, maintenance, surface erosion and washout—asphalt is the preferred option.

Durability, Cost and Maintenance: With the high precipitation experienced all year-round, standing and flowing water are major concerns. The durability of the trail is greatly reduced on all three granular installations when higher user volumes are combined with standing water, and bases would experience significant erosion from surface drainage. Asphalt and concrete are highly durable surfaces in wet and dry weather and require less maintenance than the granular trail surfaces. Full lifecycle costs of the 5 surface materials are included in the technical memo on surface material. Asphalt and traditional granular surfaces are significantly less expensive than the other options. The lower capital costs of traditional granular are offset by higher cost of ongoing maintenance.

Strategic Alignment: To achieve the goals of the Bike St. John's Master Plan and the related goals in sustainability, affordable housing, healthy living, and public transit, it's important to provide a facility that accommodates people of all ages and abilities, and encourages active transportation. A smooth and stable surface material is more comfortable and inviting for a wider range of users.

Given the factors above, a continuous asphalt surface treatment for the length of Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path is recommended.

Pathway Alignment

Where route choices needed to be made, the public was consulted about preferred pathway alignments.

- From Kelly's Brook Park to St. John's Farmers Market, most people preferred a route travelling along Graves Street.

- From St. John's Farmers Market to Wishingwell Park, most people preferred a route travelling behind the market.
- Along Empire Avenue, from Kings Bridge Road to Rennie's Mill Road, residents preferred converting street to one-way eastbound (instead of removing parking).

Design work will continue for these preferred alignments unless for technical reasons they are determined to be unfeasible.

Lighting, Wayfinding & Amenities

Pathway lighting is important for safety and usability of the shared-use path. The feeling of security is impacted by illumination, particularly in the fall and winter when days are short. Sections of the existing pathway are difficult and uncomfortable to use when lighting is lower.

- A context-sensitive approach will be used for lighting with focused area lighting in some areas, broader lighting in more open park spaces.
- Lighting will be limited to useable hours, similar to other city parks such as Bannerman Park and Victoria Park.
- Lighting will be designed to minimize impact for neighbouring properties.

Wayfinding, landscaping and amenities will be included.

- Accessibility will be considered for style and placement of wayfinding signage and amenities.
- Amenities such as recycling and waste receptacles, benches, pet waste stations, shade and wind-break planting, way-finding signs, shared-use guideline signs, and bike racks will be included

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications:

Project is funded by provincial and federal program. See note on funding announcement here: <http://stjohns.ca/media-release/governments-invest-upgrades-path-link-neighbourhoods-st-johns>

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: n/a

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans:

This shared use path directly supports the City's Strategic Goal M3 "Expand and maintain a safe and accessible active transportation network".

4. Legal or Policy Implications: n/a

5. Privacy Implications: n/a

6. Engagement and Communications Considerations:

Public engagement results are included in the attached What We Heard report. The project team will do further engagement with the Inclusion Advisory Committee as detail design progresses. Stakeholders along Graves Street route will be invited to a more focused meeting about design considerations for that particular route alignment.

7. Human Resource Implications: n/a

8. Procurement Implications:

The current engagement and design project will conclude with a tender ready package for construction in 2021-2022.

9. Information Technology Implications: n/a

10. Other Implications: n/a

Recommendation:

That Council approve the following key decisions as this project moves into detailed design:

- a) use of an asphalt surface treatment for the length of Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path
- b) pursue the Graves Street alignment option (subject to feasibility and property impact)
- c) pursue the alignment option that passes behind the Community Market (subject to feasibility and property impact)
- d) use a one-way configuration for the Empire Avenue section
- e) include illumination in the plan with a balanced approach that is sensitive to adjacent uses and minimizes dim areas immediately adjacent the trail during normal use hours
- f) include and consider accessibility in the provision of amenities such as recycling and waste receptacles, benches, pet waste stations, shade and wind-break planting, way-finding signs, shared-use guideline signs, and bike racks
- g) continue to consult with the Inclusion Advisory Committee and other stakeholders as needed during the detailed design process

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path - WWH.docx
Attachments:	- Surface Material Technical Memo.pdf - Surface Material Summary Matrix.pdf - What We Heard KB SUP.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 18, 2021

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

Scott Winsor - Mar 18, 2021 - 11:48 AM

Jason Sinyard - Mar 18, 2021 - 12:33 PM