



Subject: *Active Transportation - Highway 214*
To: Executive Committee
Date Prepared: March 2023
Related Motions: C19(280), C21(147)
Prepared by: Logan Blanchard, Project Engineer
Approved by: Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer
Jesse Hulsman, Director of Infrastructure and Operations

Summary

The intent of this report is to validate the current plan forward for the Highway 214 Active Transportation project. The project consists of four sections of new infrastructure - mainly focused along Highway 214 - per a funding agreement established through all levels of government.

On March 3, 2023, Staff were provided an updated 'Issued for Tender' drawing set by The Consultant - EXP Services Inc. - for 'Section 1' and 'Section 3' following a final review. Additionally, Staff have compiled relevant documents required in order to release a 'Request for Construction' to the public for this work. 'Section 2' and 'Section 4', however, remain in the design phase. Discussions with regulatory bodies, stakeholders, and The Consultant are active to find solutions that meet the spirit and intent of the project funding submission.

In order to minimize further delay and utilize all available funding, this report recommends the immediate tendering of Sections 1 and 3 together, while concurrently working toward releasing a separate joint tender for 'Section 2' and 'Section 4' which is projected to happen August 2023.

Financial Impact Statement

There would be no anticipated financial impact to the Municipality. Abandoning part of the project (Alternative 1) may render The Municipality unable to enforce the Local Improvement Charge on PID# 45085248, thereby potentially resulting in \$195,985.00 of lost revenue. Also, The Municipality may incur costs associated with 'Section 2' and 'Section 4' design and study efforts to-date.

Recommendation

Staff currently plan a combined 'Request for Construction' in April 2023 for 'Section 1' and 'Section 3'. A separate tender release is planned to follow for 'Section 2' and 'Section 4' once detailed design is complete. There is no recommended motion, as this report is to update Executive Committee of the project status that has been 4 years in the making.

Background

Discussion of pedestrian connectivity via active transportation infrastructure began in July 2019. At the time, Staff direction was received to assess the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge across Highway 102. The purpose of this bridge would be to enable direct pedestrian access between residential and commercial/industrial zones.

That effort helped pass a council motion in October of 2019, which resulted in a letter sent to MP Kody Blois to discuss forecast upcoming funding programs that may fit with larger Municipal projects. Staff met with provincial staff multiple times in 2020 to understand regulatory crossing requirements, and receive feedback on technical options and constraints.

A project was added to the ‘Municipal 2020-21 Capital Budget’ to enable funding applications. Through further discussions with both the local MP and MLA, it was determined that the best funding fit would be linked through the ‘Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Reduction’ funding program. The dollar value for pedestrian connectivity improvement was discussed in detail, and the total cost of the project became a major factor in project scoping.

The pricing of standalone bridges became significantly higher than the fiscal responsibility The Municipality was looking to take on at the time, and the construction requirements for a bridge would have negatively impacted the GHG cost benefit scenario for the funding. A tunnel concept was also explored for a section of the project length. That option also became impractical, as the minimum sizing requirements to be considered an “Active Transportation” facility resulted in a cost deemed too large to be practical for the funding opportunity.

In September 2020, Council approved the current project scope alternative for the funding opportunity, that focused on either filling in strategic current gaps or expanding on the long-term visions of the Municipal “Centre AT Trail.” Since this was an existing Municipal priority, it aligned well with the funding opportunity. Following 18 months of correspondence and revision, the funding application was approved in March 2022.

Discussion

The purpose of this project is to improve pedestrian mobility and accessibility through the installation of new sidewalk and active transportation infrastructure focused along Highway 214 Elmsdale. Proposed work is split into four sections which are shown in Figure 1 below:

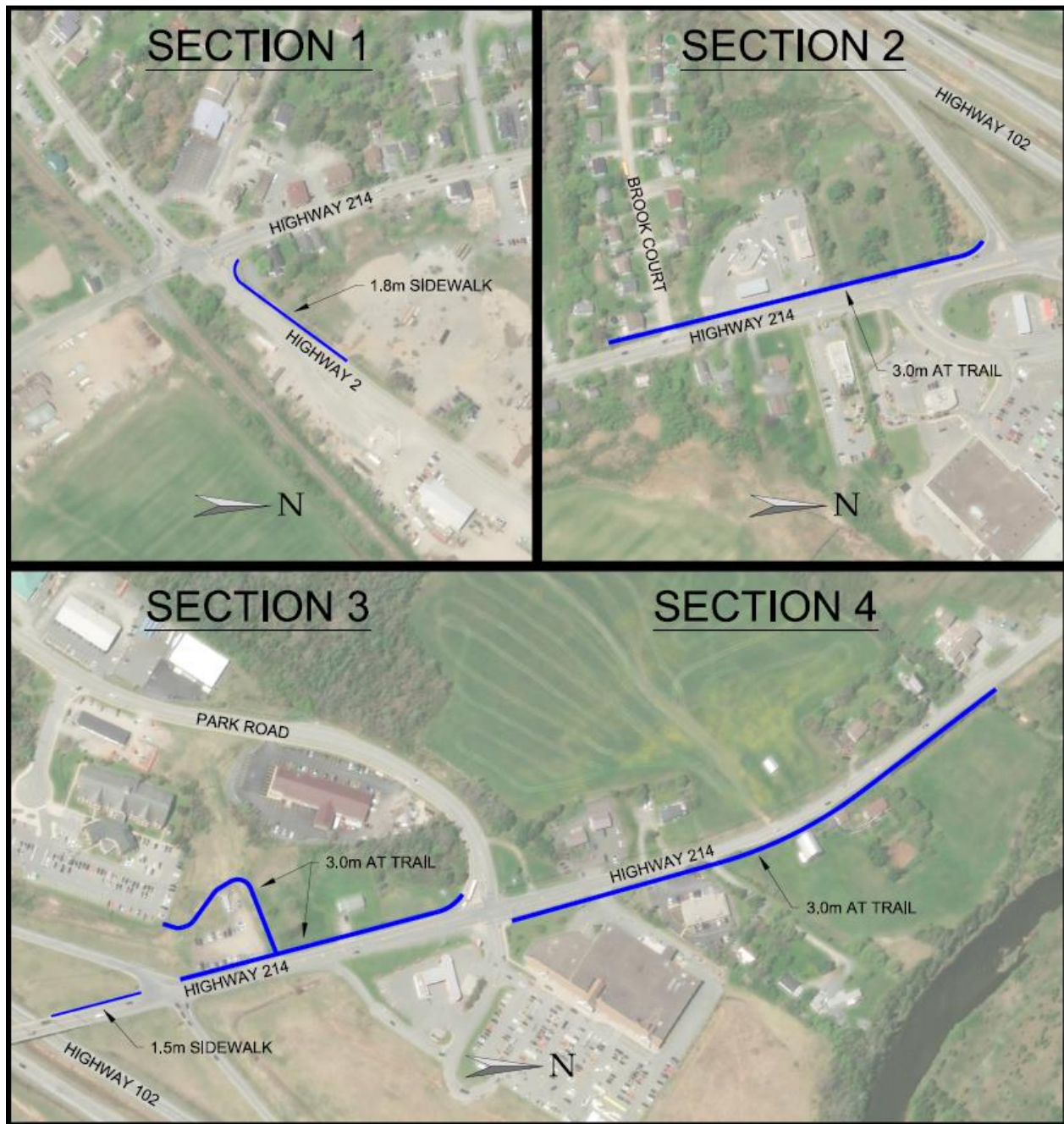


Figure 1: Project Overview

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The four sections of the project are described as follows:

- **Section 1:** Concrete sidewalk which runs northeast along Highway 2 from the Highway 214 intersection.
- **Section 2:** Widening of an existing asphalt trail along Highway 214 from Civic 224 to the Highway 102 northbound off-ramp.
- **Section 3:** Asphalt sidewalk and trail along Highway 214 from the Highway 102 underpass structure to the intersection with Park Road. As part of this section, a trail segment was

added to provide an accessible, more direct route from Highway 214 to the Lloyd E. Matheson Centre.

- **Section 4:** Asphalt trail along Highway 214 which extends northwest from the intersection with Park Road, and terminates near the southwest edge of PID# 45085248.

CURRENT PROGRESS

As of March 10, 2023, Staff have received completed 'Issued for Tender' drawings for 'Section 1' and 'Section 3'. Staff have compiled and updated documents to release a 'Request for Construction' to the public. The 'Work Within Highway Right-of-Way Permit' for 'Section 1' and 'Section 3' has been submitted with the design drawings to NSDPW for regulatory approval.

Presently, work for 'Section 2' remains in the conceptual (<50%) design phase. Widening the existing sidewalk cross-section was not deemed to be feasible as insufficient right-of-way space resulted in an encroachment on the Elmsdale Cemetery property (PID# 45148004.) Discussions continue between The Municipality, The Consultant, and relevant regulatory bodies to confirm if completing a rehabilitation of the existing sidewalk and implementing accessibility measures would be eligible for reimbursement under the funding agreement. Given the delays in response experienced to-date, Staff expect to have a solution in Spring 2023. Following completion of a detailed design and thorough internal review, work covered in 'Section 2' is anticipated to be ready for tendering in August 2023, with construction occurring through Fall 2023.

Like 'Section 2', Staff are working to establish a Section 4 design which meets regulatory and budgetary constraints. Discussions are ongoing between Staff, regulatory bodies and an adjacent property owner to determine an effective solution, between the following:

- Asphalt trail with a continuous 3.0m width. This is the preferred solution provided land acquisition and utility relocation costs are minimized; or
- Asphalt trail with a 3.0m width, except slightly narrower at pinch points (locations where existing conflicts are present.) Though this scenario would result in an inconsistent cross-section, it may reduce near-term costs and could be rectified with future development along Hwy 214

Once the 'Section 4' design is completed for the east side of Highway 214, it is anticipated to be tender-ready with 'Section 2' in August 2023. Construction is expected to occur through Fall 2023.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the project lifecycle, The Consultant has provided cost estimates which account for scope changes and construction cost increases over time. Table 1 shows the cost variance for each project section over time:

Table 1: Project Costing (2020 vs. 2023)

Section	Estimated Cost (2020)	Estimated Cost (2023)
1	\$58,420.00	\$186,500.00
2	\$57,092.73	\$57,092.73*
3	\$336,237.88	\$554,104.00
4	\$569,452.50	\$569,452.50*
Design (EXP)	\$135,890.00	\$135,890.00
Total Cost	\$1,157,093.11	\$1,503,039.23
Available Funding	\$1,708,000.00	

*Costs not updated since 2020

As shown above, costs for sections 2 and 4 have not been updated since submission of an initial estimate in August 2020. Due to scope adjustments and inflationary increases from 2020-2023, costs for ‘Section 1’ and ‘Section 3’ have risen considerably. However, all expected design and construction costs remain within the original budget to-date. Despite an expected price increase from 2020 for Section 2 and Section 4, Staff intend to minimize costs where possible to ensure the project is designed and constructed within budget.

Alternative Option 1 - Project Abandonment (Section 2 and Section 4)

Due to anticipated encroachment on the Elmsdale Cemetery property, widening the existing sidewalk to 3.0m to meet ‘active transportation trail’ standards have been deemed impractical for Section 2. Staff are working to confirm that, in lieu of a new active transportation trail, the existing sidewalk can be upgraded to improve accessibility.

To help recoup costs associated with future sidewalk construction along Highway 214, an amendment to ‘By-Law F100, Local Improvement Charge’ was enacted in April 2021. The amendment requires a payment of \$132,985.00 for the subject infrastructure, as well as a \$63,000.00 administration fee once a development permit is issued for a mixed-use building on PID# 45085248. Section 4 of the project includes infrastructure which fronts this parcel, and may therefore be eligible for reimbursement per ‘By-Law F100.’

Staff do not recommend consideration of ‘Alternative 1’ as abandoning Section 2 and Section 4 of the project would limit accessible connectivity between anticipated future developments and the AT network. Furthermore, The Municipality may not be eligible for reimbursement of the local improvement charge nor the administration fee associated with trail construction.

Attachments

N/A