

20th Street between Idylwyld Drive and 2nd Avenue Improvements

ISSUE

This report provides information on the improvements planned for construction on 20th Street between Idylwyld Drive and 2nd Avenue, which were included in the City of Saskatoon's application for partial funding through Infrastructure Canada's Natural Infrastructure Fund. The application is still pending.

BACKGROUND

The Planning and Operations Committee, at its meeting held on October 18, 2013, considered the City Centre Plan – Phase No. 3 of the City Centre Plan Project report, and resolved:

- “1) That a report be forwarded to City Council recommending endorsement of the key strategies outlined in the City Centre Plan; and
- 2) That the Administration report back with an Implementation Plan for the immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term implementation of the plan.”

The report highlighted the following:

The Plan is organized into three major components:

1. Public Places;
2. Moving Around and Infrastructure; and
3. Policy to Enable Development.

The Plan then builds out 12 key strategies that will lead to achieving the vision:

1. a strong and unique retail centre as a destination for the region;
2. a new west Downtown;
3. a new network of public spaces throughout the city to serve all seasons;
4. a broad network of pedestrian priority streets;
5. improved connections to surrounding neighbourhoods;
6. advancement of arts and culture within the City Centre;
7. stronger existing neighbourhoods;
8. improved transportation, transit, bike, and parking systems;
9. sustainable design;
10. City policies to foster private and public investment;
11. residential development is a priority; and
12. business development is a priority.

A review of the City Centre Plan document yields the following:

1. 20th Street East between Idylwyld Drive and 2nd Avenue East is identified as a “Pedestrian Priority Street”.
2. The Walkable Development Framework Plan builds upon 2nd Avenue as one of the Downtown's primary north-south pedestrian priority streets. It is already a successful avenue partially because it accommodates pedestrians with

- reduced street width crossing points, mid-block crossing areas, and landscape. The Plan recommends this pedestrian priority street be extended on both its northern and southern ends in order to fully connect the major neighbourhoods of the Downtown including City Park, the City Hall Square area, the Central Business District, and the waterfront of River Landing.
3. The Plan established several additional east-west pedestrian priority streets perpendicular to 2nd Avenue. These create strong linkages between the Meewasin Trail, 2nd Avenue, and the various neighbourhoods. These pedestrian priority streets include 26th, 23rd, 21st, 20th, and 19th Streets.
 4. A Pedestrian Priority Street is defined as follows: “A pedestrian priority street is not a street that eliminates cars or trucks, but one that provides a balance between pedestrians and vehicles. These streets have walkable design features, encourage pedestrian-orientated economic development, place making, and enhanced neighbourhood identity while accommodating vehicles.”

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting held on December 16, 2013, considered the City Centre Plan – Phase No. 3 of the City Centre Plan Project report, and resolved: “That the recommendation of the Executive Committee be adopted.”

Traffic Control at Pedestrian Crossings Council Policy, updated September 25, 2018, establishes guidelines to be followed by the Administration in the selection and installation of appropriate traffic control devices at pedestrian crossings. The policy includes the following:

- “3. Policy
The installation of appropriate traffic controls at pedestrian crossings shall be based on the process outlined in the latest edition of the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC)’s *Pedestrian Crossing Control Guide*.”

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting held on November 22, 2021, received a report outlining the City was invited to apply for up to \$20 million in funding through Infrastructure Canada’s Natural Infrastructure Fund (NIF). The 20th Street Streetscape project was identified as one of the eligible projects seeking funding and if successful, 60% of the project’s eligible costs will be covered by NIF. The remaining funding would come from the Urban Design Streetscape BID Reserve.

CURRENT STATUS

The functional plan for 20th Street is included as Appendix 1.

The design report is included as Appendix 2.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The functional plan includes the following features that will improve the pedestrian environment:

1. A general narrowing of traffic lanes and the median to reduce the amount of distance and as a result, time that a pedestrian is on the driving surface and

- vulnerable to a collision with vehicles. The geometric changes will result in infrastructure maintaining alignment with City of Saskatoon design standards.
2. New curb extensions or the widening of existing curb extensions to also reduce the amount of distance that a pedestrian is on the driving surface.
 3. The removal of the dedicated eastbound left turn lane from 20th Street to northbound on 1st Avenue. Vehicles will still be able to complete this manoeuvre, however, it will be from a shared left turn/through lane. This type of lane configuration exists at this intersection via a southbound shared left turn/through lane. The revised intersection geometry was assessed, and the intersection will still operate well within an acceptable level of service.
 4. Improved storm water management.
 5. Design elements for the streetscaping include:
 - Improved pedestrian movement and connectivity, including widening of the sidewalk areas to provide more space for pedestrians.
 - Additional amenity space to support the green infrastructure for street trees.
 - Site furnishings including tree grates, directories, bike parking, new and upgraded unit pavers.
 - Enhanced pedestrian lighting.
 6. New trees contributing to Saskatoon's Urban Forestry Management Plan initiative to increase our urban tree canopy by 15-20% by 2060 while also enhancing the human access to nature in this location.
 - Structural soil cell installations to increase soil volume per tree.
 - Increased permeability and stormwater capture/diversion.
 - Irrigation to support the plant materials.

The project capitalizes on work that asset preservation has planned for 2023, including asphalt resurfacing, concrete curb replacement, and sidewalk replacement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined above, the 20th Street Streetscape project is seeking funding through the City's application to Infrastructure Canada's Natural Infrastructure Fund. If the project is successful in obtaining approval for NIF funding, the requirement is that the project achieve substantial completion by March 31, 2025.

The City of Saskatoon's portion of funding for the streetscape work will be funded by Capital Project P.2162 - 20th Street East Streetscape.

The asset preservation work is funded from Capital Project P.2270 - Paved Roads and Sidewalk Preservation.

There will be an increase in maintenance and operational costs with the upgraded streetscape. The additional trees will be managed and maintained by Parks, specifically Urban Forestry program, and the streetscape area will be maintained by Urban Design via their operating budget.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The changes to the streetscape will impact on-street parking by reducing the number of stalls by ten on 20th Street between Idylwyld Drive and 1st Avenue. The loss of on-street parking is balanced by the gain of a pedestrian-priority street as identified in the City Centre Plan, creating safer, shorter pedestrian crossings, increased urban canopy and newly added green infrastructure.

Over the past month targeted engagement was held with Parking Services to discuss the impact to on-street parking and with Downtown Business Improvement District to discuss the changes to the street.

There are no privacy, legal, or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Should NIF funding be approved:

1. Construction and Design will release the construction tender.
2. The work will be completed over the 2023 and 2024 construction seasons.

APPENDICES

1. 20th Street between Idylwyld Drive and 2nd Avenue Functional Plan
2. 20th Street between Idylwyld Drive and 2nd Avenue Design Report

Report Approval

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