

McKercher Drive Extension Update – January 2025

ISSUE

City Council approval is required to no longer consider the future extension of McKercher Drive connecting with Berini Drive as a viable project. An approval would release the lands for other potential future uses.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council:

1. That the future extension of McKercher Drive to Berini Drive be abandoned;
2. That a portion of the lands be allocated for street right-of-way for the intersection of McKercher Drive and 105th Street as outlined in this report;
3. That a portion of the lands in Parcel B allocated for the extension adjacent to the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation property be offered for sale to the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation as set out in this report; and
4. Proceeds from the sale of lands previously allocated for right-of-way be placed into the Dedicated Roadway Reserve.

BACKGROUND

In the 1980s, Erindale neighbourhood plans included lands so that McKercher Drive could be extended north into Erindale in the future. Appendix 1 includes a neighbourhood sketch showing lands where the future McKercher Drive could be extended.

The Central Avenue Master Plan prepared in 2009 for the Sutherland Business Improvement District stated, “A future consideration for the City of Saskatoon street network historically includes the extension of McKercher Drive to Berini Drive. Although this link would alter traffic patterns within the neighbourhood and reduce volumes on Central Avenue, this link is not considered within the Traffic and Parking Management Plan as the alignment would likely necessitate the relocation of the CP rail yard within Sutherland.”

At its Regular Business meeting held on October 7, 2013, City Council approved the [University Heights Sector Plan](#) which states that the need for a McKercher Drive to Berini Drive grade-separated overpass will require monitoring and evaluation for possible improvements during the growth of the sector (page 42 of 60).

At the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation meeting held on October 3, 2023, the [Saskatoon Transportation Master Plan – 2023 Prioritized Infrastructure List](#) was presented. The McKercher Drive extension to Berini Drive is not on the list of prioritized transportation infrastructure projects.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The functional plan developed for a future extension of McKercher Drive is included in Appendix 2. It includes a bridge structure to span the Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway (CPKC) yards. It also includes the creation of new intersections at Kerr Road and at Berini Drive.

Traffic modelling has been completed to forecast future traffic volumes that would use an extension of McKercher Drive between 105th Street and Berini Drive. Based on the model for a future population of 500,000 people in the city, approximately 1,000 vehicles would use the extension in each direction of travel during the AM and PM peak hours.

There are several technical challenges with extending McKercher Drive to Berini Drive including:

- CPKC yards crossing would be nearly 150 metres. It is unclear if CPKC would allow bridge columns and footings within their yards. If they do not approve, the bridge would have to span the entire distance.
- A portion of 105th Street would need to be reconstructed and raised to meet the new intersection elevation.
- Noise mitigation may need to be considered for some homes on Beckett Crescent, Overholt Crescent, and Kutz Crescent due to the new road adjacent to their rear yards.

Although the modelling shows that the McKercher Drive extension would carry some traffic to and from Arbour Creek and Erindale, it is not a significant amount that would have enough positive impact elsewhere to justify the construction.

The land being reserved for potential right-of-way for the future extension of McKercher Drive is shown in Appendix 3. If the extension were to be abandoned, the lands could be reallocated for other purposes, including:

- A portion of Parcel B would need to be allocated as street right-of-way for the existing intersection of McKercher Drive and 105th Street.
- The remainder of Parcel B is adjacent to the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (MLCN) Urban Reserve and could be offered for sale to the MLCN. This parcel may be difficult to develop on its own due to its shape and access but could create more developable lands if combined with existing MLCN lands. MLCN has approached the City in the past expressing interest in acquiring additional lands adjacent to their existing parcel. With MLCN being an adjacent landowner, Council Policy C09-033 Sale of Serviced City-Owned Lands allows for a direct sale of a remnant parcel not needed by the City to an adjacent property owner.
- Parcel AA, Parcel BB, MB59, and MB60 would no longer need to be reserved for future right-of-way or municipal buffer strip and could be released for other purposes.

Prior to any other purposes being considered further internal review, community engagement and reporting would be required (see Appendix 4 for further details). Until

an analysis of best use is completed, the sites will be the current use and maintenance of the sites will continue as they are currently maintained.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Abandoning the extension of McKercher Drive would remove the need for the City to allocate millions of unfunded dollars to the project.

Proceeds from the sale of lands previously allocated for right-of-way be placed into the Dedicated Roadway Reserve.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Privacy, social, and environmental implications were not reviewed as part of the preparation of this report.

NEXT STEPS

1. Allocate the amount of street right-of-way needed for the intersection of McKercher Drive and 105th Street.
2. Offer for sale a portion of the lands allocated for the extension in Parcel B adjacent to current MLCN lands to the MLCN.

APPENDICES

1. Erindale Neighbourhood Sketch
2. McKercher Drive Extension Functional Plan
3. McKercher Drive Extension Parcel Information
4. Next Steps for Review of Remnant Lands Process

Report Approval

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