

## **Adding Missing Sidewalk with Road Reconstruction - Sandringham Drive**

**Date:** December 7, 2106  
**To:** North York Community Council  
**From:** Director, Public Realm Section, Transportation Services  
**Wards:** Ward10 - York Centre

### **SUMMARY**

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This staff report is about a matter for which Community Council has delegated authority to make a final decision, provided that it is not amended so that it varies with City policy or by-laws.

Sidewalks are a critical piece of transportation infrastructure which provide accessibility and safety for all, including our most vulnerable road users. Vulnerable road users, including school children and seniors, were identified as a specific target in the City's recently adopted Road Safety Plan which seeks to improve the safety of Toronto's roads. Failure to add a missing sidewalk with new construction also exposes the City to additional risk in the event there is a complaint about a lack of accessible service or there is a future collision.

The City is reconstructing Sandringham Drive in 2017. This presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to add a missing sidewalk and meet the City's road classification standard policy which recommends a sidewalk on at least one side of all local roads. Road reconstruction is the most cost-effective and efficient approach to add missing sidewalks, and also offers the greatest design and construction flexibility to address local concerns. Following two community meetings with Sandringham Drive residents, City staff have revised the design to further narrow the roadbed to slow down vehicles, realign the road to minimize impacts to properties, and ensured that there will be no impacts to trees or front yards because the new road and sidewalk fits completely within the existing footprint of the road. This report recommends that Sandringham Drive be reconstructed with a sidewalk based upon the revised design.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Transportation Services recommends that:

1. North York Community Council direct the Executive Director of Engineering and Construction Services to continue with the planned delivery of a sidewalk on the south side of Sandringham Drive.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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Sidewalk construction is most cost-effective and efficient when bundled with planned State of Good Repair projects such as road reconstruction. The reconstruction of Sandringham Drive between Barwick Drive and Tresillian Road, including the provision of the missing sidewalk is scheduled for delivery in 2017, as part of the Transportation Services' approved 2016-2025 Capital budget and Plan.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with this statement.

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

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The provision of sidewalks helps to remove barriers to access for vulnerable populations including children, seniors and persons with disabilities. Sidewalks are an essential part of the City's transportation network and offer a necessary service to those who travel on foot or using mobility devices. In February 2016, the City's Disability, Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee provided a unanimous endorsement of the role sidewalks play in reducing barriers to access and the need to add them whenever there are major construction opportunities.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On July 30-August 1, 2002, City Council adopted the report entitled, "City-Wide Program for Provision of Essential Sidewalk Links," prioritizing the installation of sidewalks on arterial and collector roads. The Council decision can be found at: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2002/agendas/council/cc020730/pof11rpt/cl001.pdf>

On May 25-27, 2009, City Council adopted the Toronto Walking Strategy and its three Guiding Principles: (1) universal accessibility, (2) safety and (3) design excellence. Implementation action items 3-1 and 3-2 state, "Construct new sidewalks during road reconstruction and resurfacing, or when applicable, through the development review process – on both sides of the street in all areas where they are missing" and, "Review current practices and policies for constructing new sidewalks where they are missing on existing local streets." The Council decision can be found at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.PW24.6>

On February 16, 2016, the Disability, Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee unanimously supported the direction described in this report. The Committee decision can be found at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.DI7.6>

On July 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2016 City Council approved the Road Safety Plan which targets vulnerable road users including pedestrians, seniors and school children and includes a recommendation to further enhance the Missing Links sidewalk capital program. The Council decision can be found at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PW14.1>

## COMMENTS

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### Why Sidewalks Matter

Walking is the simplest and most common form of transportation, and sidewalks are an important part of a modern transportation network. Therefore, provision of safe, comfortable and accessible sidewalks on all public streets is a fundamental objective of the City of Toronto and the Transportation Services Division.

Sidewalks support safety, accessibility, affordable transportation, physical activity, safe routes to school, aging in place and sustainable growth. These themes are reflected in the City's Official Plan (2004), Pedestrian Charter (2002), Walking Strategy (2009), Seniors Strategy (2013), Healthy Streets (2014), Road Safety Plan (2016), among others.

In brief, sidewalks provide:

- **Safety.** Sidewalks offer a protected, dedicated space for all pedestrians. This is especially important for vulnerable pedestrians and when visibility is poor (i.e. weather events; dark).
- **Universal accessibility.** Sidewalks are a fundamental requirement for an accessible city. They must be free of all barriers, safe, convenient, direct and comfortable for persons of all ages and abilities.
- **Affordable transportation.** Safe walking opportunities can reduce inequality by enabling individuals without motor vehicles, such as older adults, children, and many families who choose not to own a motor vehicle or who cannot afford one, to easily access goods and services.
- **Physical activity.** Sidewalks help counter obesity and inactivity through a built environment that promotes safe walking.
- **Safe routes to school.** Walking to school develops lifelong active habits and has been shown to improve learning.
- **Traffic calming.** Sidewalks can also help to calm fast-moving traffic by narrowing the roadway. The City of Toronto's Traffic Calming Policy states that a continuous sidewalk should be present prior to the installation of traffic calming.
- **Aging in place.** Sidewalks support gentle exercise for older adults and provide safer access to local amenities such as shops and recreation. This is critical for those older adults who do not drive, and who may feel vulnerable as pedestrians without sidewalks.
- **Sustainable growth.** As Toronto's population grows, we can no longer accommodate more vehicles on our roads (due to the costs of congestion) and additional GHG emissions. Sidewalks simplify the choice of walking as a means of transportation.

### Installing Sidewalks on Local Roads

Local roads remain the largest gap in the walking network and generate the highest number of requests to complete missing links. Nearly one-quarter of all local roads in Toronto, or 800 km, are without a sidewalk.

Most local roads have residential land uses, and where sidewalks are missing, pedestrians have no alternative but to walk on the roadway or on unimproved road shoulders. In winter months when the roads are icy, the pavement width narrowed due to snow, and daylight hours are reduced, the walking conditions compare unfavourably to roadways with sidewalks. As such, providing sidewalks on local roads to enhance safety and accessibility is vital to the city's transportation network.

The most effective opportunity to install sidewalks is during road reconstruction. A road reconstruction is undertaken when a road has reached the end of its lifespan and short-term repairs or resurfacing is no longer adequate. During reconstruction the full foundation and asphalt surface is completely rebuilt. This is a normal, but infrequent component of State of Good Repair work and presents a significant opportunity to reconfigure the roadway and rebuild with an improved design. In the case of local roads with reduced 'wear and tear' due to vehicle types and volumes, a road may be reconstructed once every 100-125 years. When roads are reconstructed, staff try to take advantage of the opportunity to "bundle" improvements because the additional cost of implementing sidewalks is negligible if the road is being reconstructed anyway.

### **Installing a Sidewalk on Sandringham Drive as Part of Road Reconstruction**

At the request of the local Councillor, a community meeting was held on September 21, 2016 with Sandringham Drive residents to discuss the proposed road reconstruction and sidewalk project which is to be constructed in 2017. Residents raised concerns about the addition of a sidewalk, the width of the proposed road, the need for traffic calming, impacts to private property and trees, and the loss of the 'special' character of their street while also expressing concern about the existing condition of the road. City staff also met with a smaller working group of residents and the local Councillor on November 22, 2016 to further review the proposed road design.

Sandringham Drive has a paved surface which varies between 7 and 8 metres in width plus ditches on either side of the street to provide for drainage. As many ditches have since been filled as a result of development and front yard enhancements, the drainage system has failed. Consequently, the road is subject to surface flooding and the base has deteriorated such that it must now be completely replaced. A consultant study of this street reviewed drainage and road conditions and recommended the adoption of an urban cross-section with a curb and gutter and drainage systems running underneath the road. An urban cross-section requires less land for road reconstruction than a rural cross-section which would require excavating new and deeper ditches, and thus have significant impacts on mature trees, front yards and driveways.

As a result of the community meeting, City staff modified the design and further narrowed the existing roadbed to 7.2 metres in width with a 1.5 metre sidewalk. The combined road pavement and sidewalk structure is now centred right in the middle of the road allowance, so that the distance to the property line is the same for all property owners on both sides of the street, regardless of which side has the sidewalk. The curbs will be 'rolled' in respect of the street's semi-rural character, and the narrowed road pavement will also serve to slow down vehicular speeds. The new combined pavement and sidewalk structure will meet City standards, safety guidelines and Council policies,

but will also occupy less space than the width of the existing road pavement and ditches, and all existing trees and all front lawns will be preserved. The new roadbed, curbs and sidewalk will be 9.1 metre wide as compared to the existing road and ditches which is 10 to 11 metres in width, resulting in a net gain of between 0.9 to 1.9 metres of new grass boulevard for abutting residents (unless they have previously filled in their ditches). A copy of the proposed design is included as Attachment 1. It is important to note that the pavement widths cannot otherwise be narrowed in the absence of sidewalks due to the lack of a dedicated safe space for pedestrians.

The provision of sidewalks is a safety-oriented policy and if a sidewalk is not added to a new or major construction project, the City may incur additional risk in the event that a collision involving pedestrians occurs. The City should also be mindful of its obligations to provide sidewalks in order to remove barriers to access and to accommodate individuals, as required, by the Human Rights Code. Legal Services has also provided advice and raised concerns about the City's previous approach to sidewalk installation on local roads. Past practices which permitted sidewalks to be excluded from road reconstruction projects based only on the objections of abutting residents without opportunity for Council consideration are no longer considered to meet the test for transparency and openness in decision-making. For all of the above reasons, road reconstruction on local roads should include the provision of a sidewalk on at least one side of the road in order to address infrastructure requirements of today and tomorrow.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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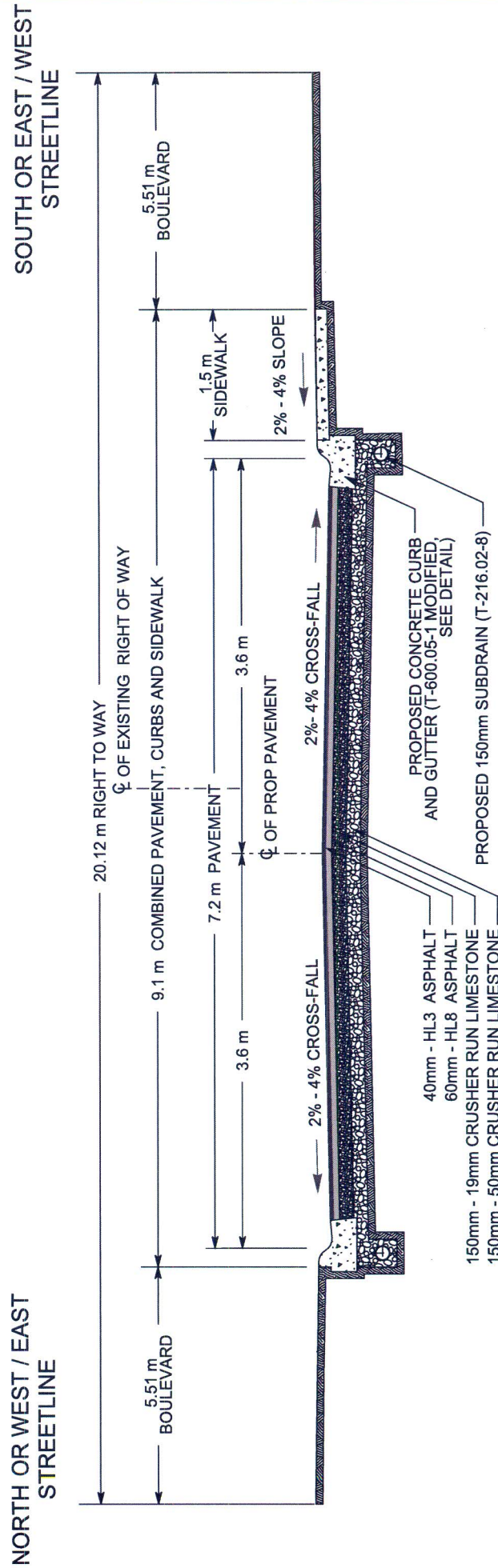
Elyse Parker  
Director, Public Realm Section  
Transportation Services

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Sandringham Drive Preferred Option Modified

# SANDRINGHAM DRIVE PREFERRED OPTION: URBAN CROSS SECTION (MODIFIED)



TYPICAL PROPOSED CROSS-SECTION

N.T.S.