

Hillcrest Local Improvement Project Update

Engineering and Environmental Services
Planning and Development Services

April 2012



The City is pleased to get the ball rolling on the Hillcrest Local Improvement (LI) Project! In January, a questionnaire was delivered to residents and property owners. The intent was to identify problems with water and sewer services, drainage, and road safety. Several questions gauged preferences on neighbourhood character, road design, and hard-surface trails.

The City extends a big thank you to the 122 people who responded! Input is being reviewed by *Engineering Services* to inform further investigation and pre-design work. The following is an overview of issues identified through the questionnaire. Full results can be viewed at the *Planning Services* Office located at 4210 Fourth Ave, Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

The Hillcrest LI Project requires a lengthy planning process before improvements can be implemented. This may take several years to complete. Future steps include an information meeting, property owner vote on LI charges, and budget approvals by City Council for design work and construction. Project updates will be posted online at www.whitehorse.ca/liprojects.

Note: *Not all comments will result in local improvements. Alternatives to preferred options may be required due to engineering constraints.*

BLEEDER and HEAT-TRACE SYSTEMS

The elimination of bleeder systems is a primary objective of the Hillcrest LI Project. Bleeders are a significant contributor to our city's high water consumption and excessive sewer treatment loads. ***Did you know that bleeders can waste up to two litres of water per minute?***

While the City has a record of bleeder locations, this list is incomplete and requires supplementation with bleeders identified through the questionnaire. Confirmation through household visits will also be required to ensure that all water systems are properly accounted for in pre-design work.

Until upgrades can be achieved, bleeders will continue to require maintenance to ensure that they operate in the most efficient way possible. If you experience problems with your bleeder, such as a failing thermostatic control, please contact *Public Works* at **668-8350** to schedule a servicing appointment.

Failed heat-trace systems (the heated wiring wrapped around pipes to protect from freezing) were reported by some respondents. The City intends to leave properly functioning heat-trace systems in place during the LI process. If you experience problems with your heat-trace, contact *Public Works*.

WATER and SEWER

Engineering Services is drawing from questionnaire input to inform the assessment of water and sewer mains, while identifying required upgrades. Problems reported include:

- low and/or inconsistent water pressure;
- frozen water services; and
- suspected water leaks.

Reports on water pressure will supplement modeling information used to ensure that supply pressures meet current City standards. Where slow draining sewers have been identified, underground camera work will confirm the locations of failing, improperly graded, and improperly maintained sewers.

Concerns were reported for instances of murky water. This can occur when water mains are flushed by *Public Works* as part of regular maintenance. Sewer odours, particularly in basements, were also reported. This problem is typically associated with the internal plumbing of the home and requires the attention of a plumbing professional.

RURAL CHARACTER

Hillcrest roads have a unique "rural" character that features shared vehicle/pedestrian areas and grassed drainage swales. The majority of respondents (81%) indicated that they favour maintaining this character on local roads. Of those not in favour, the majority indicated preference for a road design that features curbs and gutters, but no sidewalk.

Drainage issues were reported which include flooding of swales, front yards, and driveways (usually in spring). Run-off problems resulting from elevation differences were also indicated. These locations are being investigated by *Engineering Services*.

As the snow melts and ground thaws, residents are encouraged to email photos of problem locations to erica.beasley@whitehorse.ca.

SAFETY

Addressing pedestrian and vehicular safety issues is an important component of the Hillcrest LI Project. Locations

of concern identified through past consultation, and the questionnaire, include:

- intersection of Dalton Tr, Kluane Cr, and Hillcrest Dr;
- intersection of Roundel Rd and Summit Rd;
- curve on Sunset Dr N, between Summit Dr and Roundel Rd;
- blind spots at Hillcrest entrance due to snow banks;
- lane confusion on Hillcrest Dr at Alaska Hwy junction;
- speeding on Park Ln near the playground; and
- potholes throughout.

Many respondents (68%) indicated that the shared-road design is working effectively in Hillcrest. Some reported, however, that the design is not effective on Hillcrest Dr where problems include:

- speeding;
- confusion due to undefined vehicle lanes;
- unsafe and undefined pedestrian ways;
- impaired visibility where Hillcrest Dr crests; and
- congestion caused by on-street parking and narrowing of street at west end.

Respondents were less concerned with Roundel Rd, though speeding and pedestrian safety were flagged as issues.

SIDEWALKS

Upgrading to an urban standard is one means to improve safety on Hillcrest Dr and Roundel Rd. Sidewalk options are being explored in consideration of the advantages, disadvantages, and physical constraints of the north and south sides of both streets.

When asked which side of Hillcrest Dr is preferred for a sidewalk: 47% indicated the north side; 30% indicated the south side; 8% indicated both sides; and 15% indicated they prefer no sidewalk or had no opinion.

As suggested by respondents, the north side offers:

- room in the existing boulevard to accommodate a sidewalk;
- sunlight, which accelerates snow and ice melt; and
- connection to residential streets.

Concern was raised that streets on the north side of Hillcrest Dr slope towards intersections and present a hazard to pedestrians, when slippery.

The south side offers:

- connection to the City and school bus stops;
- access to trails; and
- fewer crossings (only one at Dalton Tr).

The north side of Roundel Rd was also the preferred choice by respondents for a sidewalk. Some indicated that they

seldom use this route and therefore had no opinion.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

While trail connections are not part of the Hillcrest LI Project, the questionnaire was used to solicit input on projects that may be developed through alternative funding sources.

Respondents were asked to prioritize one of four options for a hard-surface, non-motorized, multi-use trail. The majority of respondents (59%) indicated priority for a trail along the airport side of the Alaska Hwy (connecting to the existing airport trail and Black St stairs). The City wishes for this trail to be constructed as soon as possible, recognizing its significance to the cycle-commuting network.

Developing the highway/airport trail is considerably more expensive and complex than other proposed options. Time will be needed for negotiations with Yukon Government *Department of Highways and Public Works*, and to secure funding. The City extends support for the HCA application to the Community Development Fund for a construction grant.

In the interim, the City is moving ahead with a hard-surface trail that connects Sunset Dr N to the Elijah Smith School and Hamilton Blvd bus stop (the second most preferred option of the questionnaire). Enhancing this active transportation link and improving access to transit supports City goals for sustainability and universal accessibility. Funds have been allocated for construction which is intended for this summer. Drainage was flagged by respondents as an important consideration for the trail's design.

Cycling infrastructure within Hillcrest is also being explored in pre-design work. Cycle lanes will ideally be located on Roundel Rd and Hillcrest Dr, if a suitable design can be achieved. Factors include lane width requirements and sidewalk additions. Comments on potential cycle lanes can be submitted to erica.beasley@whitehorse.ca.

TRANSIT

Information was collected on public transit services. Some residents reported that the new loop-based system has improved their transit commute, while others reported problems linked to scheduling, route extension, and lack of bus stop amenities. Comments have been forwarded to the *Transit Department* for consideration.

CONTACT

If you were not able to participate in the questionnaire and would like to submit input, please contact Erica Beasley, Planner, at **668-8600**.