



**City of Saint John  
Common Council Meeting  
AGENDA**

Monday, December 2, 2024

6:00 pm

2nd Floor Common Council Chamber, City Hall

*An Electronic means of communication will be used at this meeting. The public may attend the meeting in person in the Council Chamber or view the meeting on the City's Website ([www.saintjohn.ca](http://www.saintjohn.ca)) or on Rogers TV.*

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**Pages**

1. Call to Order
  - 1.1 Land Acknowledgement
  - 1.2 National Anthem
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Disclosures of Conflict of Interest
4. Business Matters - Municipal Officers
  - 4.1 Heather Way Future Use
5. Supplemental Agenda
6. Committee of the Whole
7. Adjournment

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## COMMON COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	2024-323
Report Date	November 29, 2024
Meeting Date	December 02, 2024
Service Area	Public Works and Transportation Services

Her Worship Mayor Donna Noade Reardon and Members of Common Council

**SUBJECT: Heather Way Future Use**

### **AUTHORIZATION**

Primary Author	Commissioner/Dept. Head	Chief Administrative Officer
<i>Tim O'Reilly</i>	<i>Michael Hugenholtz</i>	<i>J. Brent McGovern</i>

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Common Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to re-open all four lanes of Heather Way to vehicular traffic as soon as practically possible in 2024, and plan to finish the asphalt resurfacing of the remaining lanes of Heather Way in 2025.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Community consensus on how Heather Way should function into the future was revealed at a recent public consultation session. It was very clear the overwhelming majority of the residents in the area want Heather Way to be returned to a four (vehicular) lane roadway, and as soon as possible. This is largely in line with the staff analysis as the option that represents the lowest cost, and lines up with the City's various strategic plans.

Opening the lanes currently barricaded and resurfacing the asphalt on the remaining lanes in 2025 retains the opportunity to consider bike lanes in the future.

### **PREVIOUS RESOLUTION**

On April 19, 2021 Common Council received and filed a report on 2021 Roadway Construction Projects that referenced the planned resurfacing of Heather Way.

On July 26, 2021 Common Council resolved a change in the 2021 Asphalt Resurfacing Program that included resurfacing another street instead of Heather Way.

On November 14, 2023 Common Council resolved that the submitted report M&C 2023-246: Heather Way Resurfacing/Reconstruction be referred to the CAO for a revised solution. The staff recommendation in that report was to resurface both sides of Heather Way and incorporate buffered bike lanes.

On January 22, 2024 Common Council resolved that, as recommended in the submitted report M&C2024-019: Heather Way Resurfacing/Reconstruction, Common Council approve the recommendation to proceed with the resurfacing of one half of Heather Way and close off the other side of the median with temporary barricades as outlined in M&C2024-019.

## **REPORT**

### **Background on Prior Public Consultation**

City staff held a virtual community meeting on June 30, 2021 to solicit feedback from the local residents on potential options for re-imaging this street. Only five community members participated in the meeting. The virtual meeting was also saved and provided on the City's website following the meeting with a further 23 community members providing feedback via e-mail. The meeting included a presentation by City staff where context and a series of potential options for Heather Way's layout with pros and cons of each were provided to help generate discussion and feedback.

During the community meeting there was no consensus on what, if any changes, should occur for Heather Way. There were suggestions related to closing a portion of the street temporarily for community events. Some concerns were expressed with reducing space for vehicle traffic during limited times where major work is scheduled at the nearby Irving Oil refinery. Some comments related to improving Active Transportation beyond Heather Way were provided. Similarly, there was no consensus on a single approach among the 23 written email responses. There were some who did appear to consolidate on the idea of buffered bike lanes if an option were chosen to add cycling facilities. However, there were others who commented that spaces should be maintained as is for motorists with some indications that improved pedestrian crossings, as opposed to cycling facilities should be the focus. It appeared some respondents may have had a stronger opinion that cycling infrastructure should be added if it connected to a broader cycling route, which it does not.

In summary, there was not a general consensus from feedback provided at the June 30, 2021 meeting or in follow-up correspondence on what, if any changes to Heather Way, should be implemented.

### **Public Consultation of Last Week**

On the evening of November 27, 2024 a public consultation session was held to seek input on the future use of Heather Way following the January 2024 resolution. The session was held at Simonds High School. Approximately 200 individuals from the public attended.

During this consultation session City staff presented a number of options for the future of Heather Way including pros and cons of each option and associated costs. The information presented at this session is attached to this report.

Virtually all the residents that provided input wanted to see Heather Way reinstated to four vehicular lanes. There was further clear consensus from the majority of the individuals who spoke that the city should implement this option as soon as possible, and ahead of the approaching 2024-2025 winter season.

The following concerns were expressed by many attending:

- safety issues based on the limited width of the two open lanes,
- concerns that the street could not be plowed safely or effectively given the width,
- concerns about pedestrians trying to cross the street or catch a bus from the centre median,
- larger vehicles attempting to turn safely at the two ends of the street,
- lack of other feasible uses for the closed lanes

City staff were intending to provide time for individuals to complete a survey and review materials, available on Shape Your City. Given the clear, overwhelming consensus from community members and several Council Members after the meeting, staff are returning with an expedited recommendation. With winter upon us the window for reversing the existing lane closure is closing rapidly, and delays to support further feedback will mean this work would have to be postponed until spring 2025.

### ***STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT***

How well the different options presented at the November 27 consultation align with different city policies and strategies are summarized in the attached information.

### ***SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES***

The estimated cost to resurface the two remaining lanes is between \$200,000 - \$325,000 depending on the exact scope of work. The approximate costs of the other options discussed at the feedback session are presented in the attached materials.

### ***INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS***

In addition to the community input provided at the November 27, 2024 session detailed previously in this report, the following additional city departments contributed to the materials attached to this report:

- Utilities & Infrastructure
- Growth & Community Services
- Communications

**ATTACHMENT**

1. *M&C 2023-246 Heather Way Resurfacing/Reconstruction*
2. *Materials presented at the November 27, 2024 community consultation session*

## COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	2023-246
Report Date	November 08, 2023
Meeting Date	November 14, 2023
Service Area	Public Works & Transportation

Her Worship Mayor Donna Reardon and Members of Common Council

***SUBJECT: Heather Way Resurfacing/Reconstruction***

***OPEN OR CLOSED SESSION***

This matter is to be discussed in open session of Common Council.

***AUTHORIZATION***

Primary Author	Commissioner/Dept. Head	Chief Administrative Officer
<b><i>Michael Hugenholtz</i></b>	<b><i>Michael Hugenholtz</i></b>	<b><i>J. Brent McGovern</i></b>

***RECOMMENDATION***

It is recommended that Common Council approve the recommendation to resurface Heather Way, and to incorporate separate bike lanes on each side of the centre median as outlined in M&C 2023-246.

***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

Asphalt resurfacing was scheduled for Heather Way in 2021 but was postponed due to questions from Councillors about options for road diets and active transportation opportunities. A variation of this report was pulled from the agenda in early 2022 in an attempt to scale back the cost of some of the options presented. Staff are now recommending that resurfacing of both lanes proceed, and that one lane in each direction be repurposed for active transportation.

***REPORT***

**Background**

Heather Way is a four-lane roadway in East Saint John running between Hickey Road and Grandview Avenue . It is built with two vehicle lanes in each direction separated by a centre median and a fifth lane in breaks in the median for left-turning traffic (similar to University Avenue). There are residential neighbourhoods to the east and west of this road and is made up predominately of single family homes and townhouses. This differs slightly from the University Avenue corridor in that regard as the latter is part of the Campus-Harbour Connection (designated cycling route) and see a much higher volume of traffic

including commercial driveways and anchored by the University and Regional Hospital.

In 2021 asphalt resurfacing was planned for this street but questions were raised by Councillors when staff presented the list of streets. A number of Councillors questioned the need for the four lanes and asked if there were other alternatives for this space (i.e. a road diet). Consequently, resurfacing of this street was removed from the scope of work to enable staff to look at other options.

Based on the measured traffic volumes on Heather Way, a two-lane road has sufficient capacity to offer a good level of service for vehicle traffic. There is a concrete sidewalk on both sides of the street, separated from traffic by a grass median.

Our Move SJ Cycling strategy does not identify the need for a cycling route along Heather Way. There are no cycling facilities on either Grandview Avenue or Hickey Road.

### **Public Consultation**

City staff held a virtual community meeting on June 30, 2021 to solicit feedback from the local residents on potential options for re-imaging this street. Only five community members participated in the meeting. The virtual meeting was also saved and provided on the City's website following the meeting with a further 23 community members providing feedback via e-mail. The meeting included a presentation by City staff where context and a series of potential options for Heather Way's layout with pros and cons of each were provided to help generate discussion and feedback.

During the community meeting there was no consensus on what, if any changes, should occur for Heather Way. There were suggestions related to closing a portion of the street temporarily for community events. Some concerns were expressed with reducing space for vehicle traffic during limited times where major work is scheduled at the near by Irving Oil refinery. Some comments related to improving Active Transportation beyond Heather Way were provided.

Similarly, there was no consensus on a single approach among the 23 written e-mail responses. There were some who did appear to consolidate on the idea of buffered bike lanes if an option were chosen to add cycling facilities. However, there were others who commented that spaces should be maintained as is for motorists with some indications that improved pedestrian crossings, as opposed to cycling facilities, should be the focus. It appeared some respondents may have had a stronger opinion that cycling infrastructure should be added if it connected to a broader cycling route, which it does not.

In summary, there was not a general consensus from feedback provided at the meeting or in follow-up correspondence on what, if any changes to Heather Way, should be implemented.

### **Options Considered**

**Status Quo:** this would see the road resurfaced and all lanes remain dedicated to vehicle traffic. The cost to resurface all four lanes would be approximately \$630,000 based on updated pricing. It is anticipated that this would be a recurring cost every 15-20 years.

**Addition of Bike Lanes:** this option would see the full road resurfaced and one lane in each direction designated as a buffered bike lane. This would be similar to the approach taken on University Avenue but without the delineators or removable bollards. There would be some modest costs associated with installing signage and the annual painting of bike symbols. The presence of bike lanes will also have a traffic calming effect by reducing vehicle lanes from two to one in each direction.

**'Green' One Side of Road:** this option would see all vehicle traffic moved to one side of the existing median, with the other side being turned into greenspace. The scope of work would include:

- Removal of existing asphalt, curbs, and catch basins on one side of the median
- Adjust manholes, valve boxes and other structures to new elevation
- Place new topsoil and hydroseed
- Adjust catchbasin locations, construct new curb at location of cross streets

This option would require a one-time investment of \$1.3 million. This is reflective of the high tender prices received in recent construction tenders. There would be savings from having to resurface the asphalt on two lanes: approximately \$315,000 every 15-20 years. Assuming that basic mowing would be demanded by the neighbourhood, an *approximately* equivalent amount would have to be spent on maintenance of the additional greenspace.

This option would make sense if reconstruction is required based on asset management (this is typically after several cycles of resurfacing). We do not anticipate the need for full reconstruction for another 50 years or so. Proceeding with reconstruction at this time would mean disposal of assets that would otherwise have lots of remaining service life. It would also change the amount of discretionary capital that would otherwise be available to support parks or active transportation investments that are aligned with our strategic plans (i.e. Play SJ, Move SJ) and our ten-year capital plan.

Although cycling lanes are not specifically called for along this stretch of roadway, Council has clearly been supportive of more investments into active



transportation options. In this case the addition of buffered bike lanes can enable active transportation along this route at a very modest cost. Consolidation of vehicle traffic from two lanes to one in each direction may offer some measure of traffic calming along this route while still accommodating the current levels of traffic. Maintaining the centre median and associated left turns lanes will assure a good level of service.

### ***STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT***

This report best aligns with Common Council's priority of:

- **Move** – by enhancing active transportation options

### ***SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES***

The resurfacing of Heather Way will be done as part of our annual street resurfacing program which is jointly funded through our 2024 General Capital Budget and the 2024 General Operating Budget. The changes to the line painting and signage required for the cycling lanes can be accomplished through regular operations.

### ***INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS***

A summary of the public consultation results have been included above. Staff from *Growth & Community Services* were consulted as part of this work and are in support of the recommendations.

# Small City, Big Heart.

## Future Use of Heather Way

Community Consultations  
November - December 2024





# Purpose of Meeting

Context to help you provide input on what Heather Way should be in future

- Information from this presentation
- Initial feedback from you and others



# Steps After This Meeting

Access “Shape Your City” website: [www.shapeyourcitysaintjohn.ca](http://www.shapeyourcitysaintjohn.ca)

- Information from this meeting
- Survey to gather your feedback
- Note: Hard copy surveys available here and at City’s Customer Service Centre

Common Council then asked to decide on future use of street

- Community feedback will be provided in decision-making process



# Layout of Heather Way

- 4-lane road with centre grass median
- 5<sup>th</sup> lane in place of centre median for turning to local streets
- Sidewalk and grass median both sides



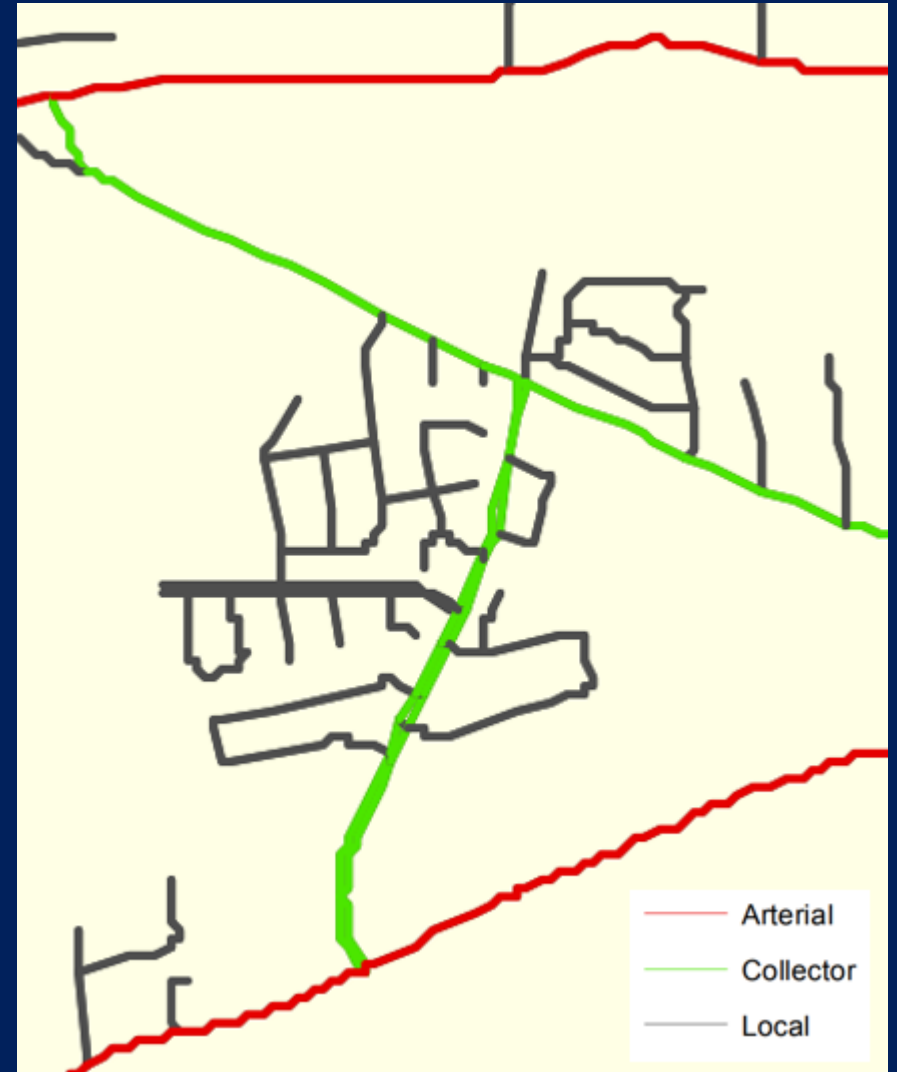
# Drone Fly Over



# Current Purposes for Heather Way



- Acts as a Collector Road
- Provides access to Local Roads such as Boyanner Cres.
- Almost no direct access to properties/driveways
- Connects to one Collector Road (Hickey) and one Arterial Road (Grandview)





# Recent Decisions

- 2020 – Heather Way identified for asphalt resurfacing
- 2021 – Council decision to delay resurfacing
- 2024 – Council decision to resurface two lanes, close other two lanes, until further consultations and long-term decision for road





# What is best future use for Heather Way?

- Not an easy question to answer
- Many factors involved
  - Let's explore these factors



# Original Added Purpose of Heather Way

- Connection between Loch Lomond Road and Grandview Industrial Park envisioned in past
- Suggests why Heather Way built as collector road with 4 lanes
- No longer opportunity to easily continue 4 lanes to Loch Lomond Road with parking for adjacent apartments



Wide Right-of-Way for Heather Way extends north of Hickey Road

# Do We Still Need 4 Vehicle Lanes?



2009 Traffic count (4 lanes counted) :	4176 daily vehicles
2020-2021 Traffic count (4 lanes counted, during COVID):	2832 daily vehicles
Nov 2024 Traffic count:	3355 daily vehicles

Heather Way does not need 4 vehicle lanes. Roads typically need 4 lanes when they serve at least 20,000 daily vehicles. Traffic on Heather Way would need to grow by 6 times current levels to justify 4 lanes.

Connecting roads (Hickey and Grandview) have 2 vehicle lanes, and therefore greater capacity on Heather Way does not generally make sense from a systems perspective either.



# Is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Turning Lane Needed?

Separate lane was available for turning left along Heather Way when a 4-lane road





# Is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Turning Lane Needed?

Separate lane for turning left no longer available as 2-lane road







# Is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Turning Lane Needed?

Is separate (3<sup>rd</sup>) lane for turning left needed anywhere along Heather Way if remains a 2-lane road?





# Is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Turning Lane Needed?

Based on current and projected future traffic levels:

- Yes, at Hickey
- Potentially at Grandview
- No, at any other roads along Heather Way
  - Traffic would need to grow 3-4 times

If Heather Way remains a 2-lane road, 3<sup>rd</sup> turning lane needs to be considered in long term design at only Hickey and Grandview locations



# How fast are vehicles travelling?

2009

- 58 km/h on east (northbound) lanes with no speed humps, 60 km/h speed limit
- 53 km/h on west (southbound) lanes with no speed humps, 60 km/h speed limit

2020-2021

- 51 km/h on east (northbound) lanes with no speed humps, 50 km/h speed limit
- 47 km/h on west (southbound) lanes with speed humps, 50 km/h speed limit
- 7 km/h speed reduction with implemented traffic calming measures

November 2024

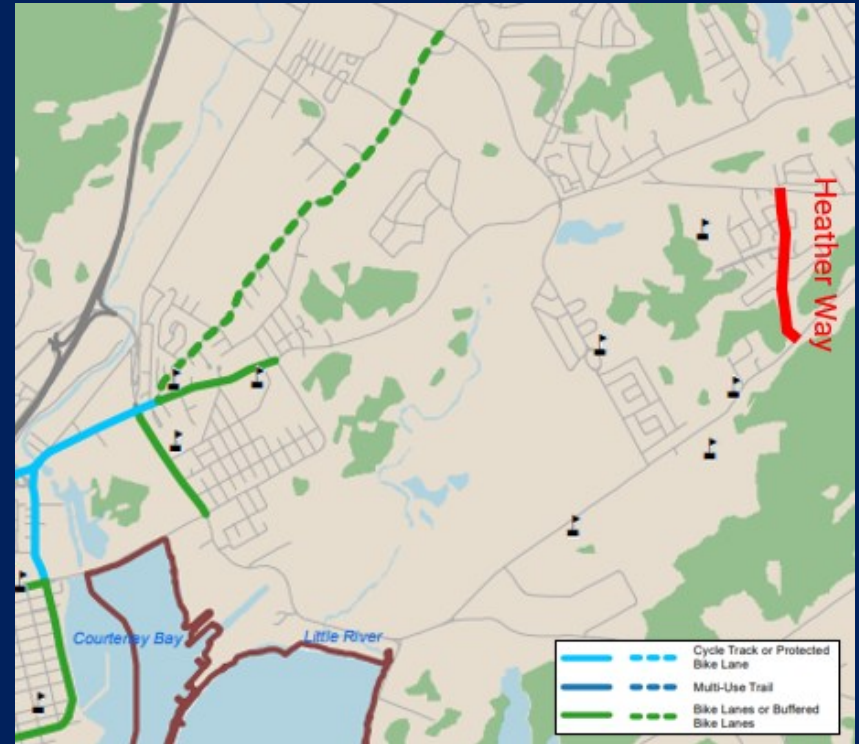
- 51 km/h on east lanes. Now one lane per direction, no speed humps, 50 km/h speed limit
- Speeds similar to 2020-2021 and close to 50 km/h speed limit





# Alignment with Transportation Plan

- Biking infrastructure focused on connected network and areas with greater use potential
  - Biking infrastructure on Heather Way would not align with plan because it would be far from planned biking network

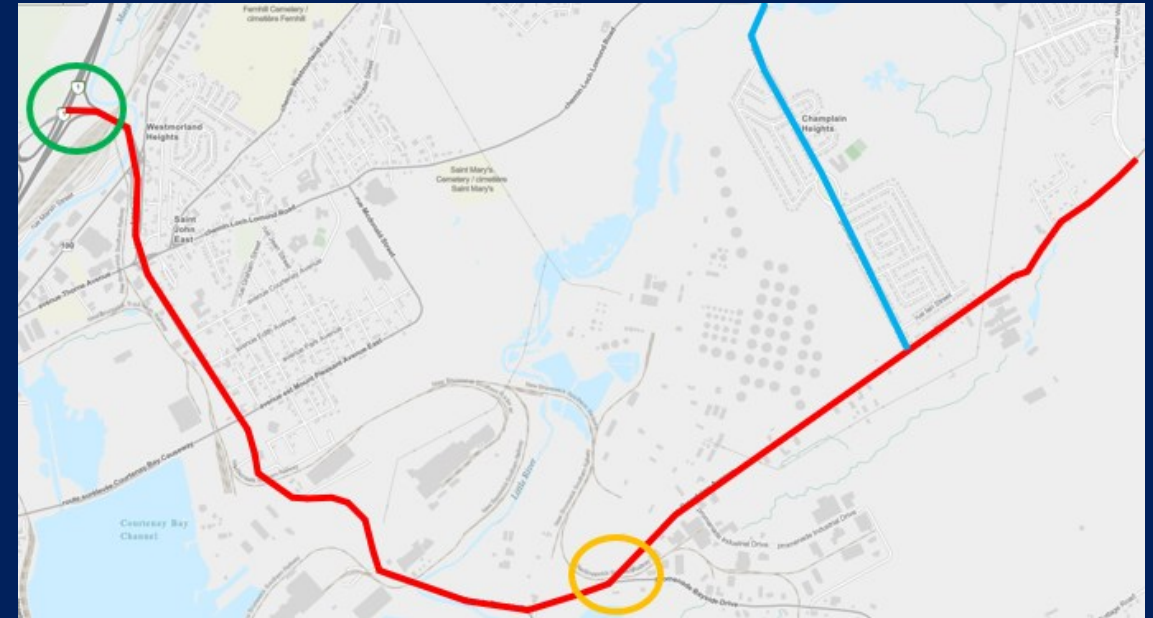


Heather Way is almost 4 km away from nearest biking infrastructure planned with MoveSJ



# Broader Transportation Considerations

- Traffic encouraged on **Bayside Drive arterial corridor** with **One Mile House Interchange**
- Improvements needed at **Old Black River Road intersection** to continue to encourage traffic using **arterial corridor**
- Discouraging traffic in **Champlain Heights** and on Heather Way is important, including by use of traffic calming (planned for Champlain Drive in 2025)
- Added traffic will be reviewed when City considers approvals of future developments in area



With continued attention on efficient traffic flow on the existing arterial network, and traffic calming in neighbourhoods, cut through traffic on Heather Way and Champlain Drive can be discouraged



# Alignment with Lane Width Guidelines

City's General Specifications	4.3 m
Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) guide	3.5 m
Width of each current open Heather Way lanes	3.8 m

Minimum lane widths needed for safe travel and snow plowing... but the wider the road, the more asphalt to maintain and risk of excessive speeding increases

Width of 2 current open Heather Way lanes meet TAC guidelines, and are adequate for plowing, but do not meet current City General Specifications for new road construction



# Alignment with Recreation Plan



A priority of PlaySJ is to reduce quantity of parks, playgrounds with greater quality fewer ones at Regional, District, and school locations

- City's investment in a new recreational space along Heather Way does not align with plan
- Recreational space maintained by community is an option in plan



Concentrated investments with PlaySJ can maintain three high quality District or school playgrounds near the Heather Way community





# Alignment with Land Use Requirements

- Insufficient lot depth (15 m) for a development fronting on Heather Way
- No expectation adjacent land owners would have interest in expanding development plans



Row housing using lands of the closed lanes of Heather may have worked but there is insufficient lot depth to support it



# Alignment with Infrastructure Management Plan

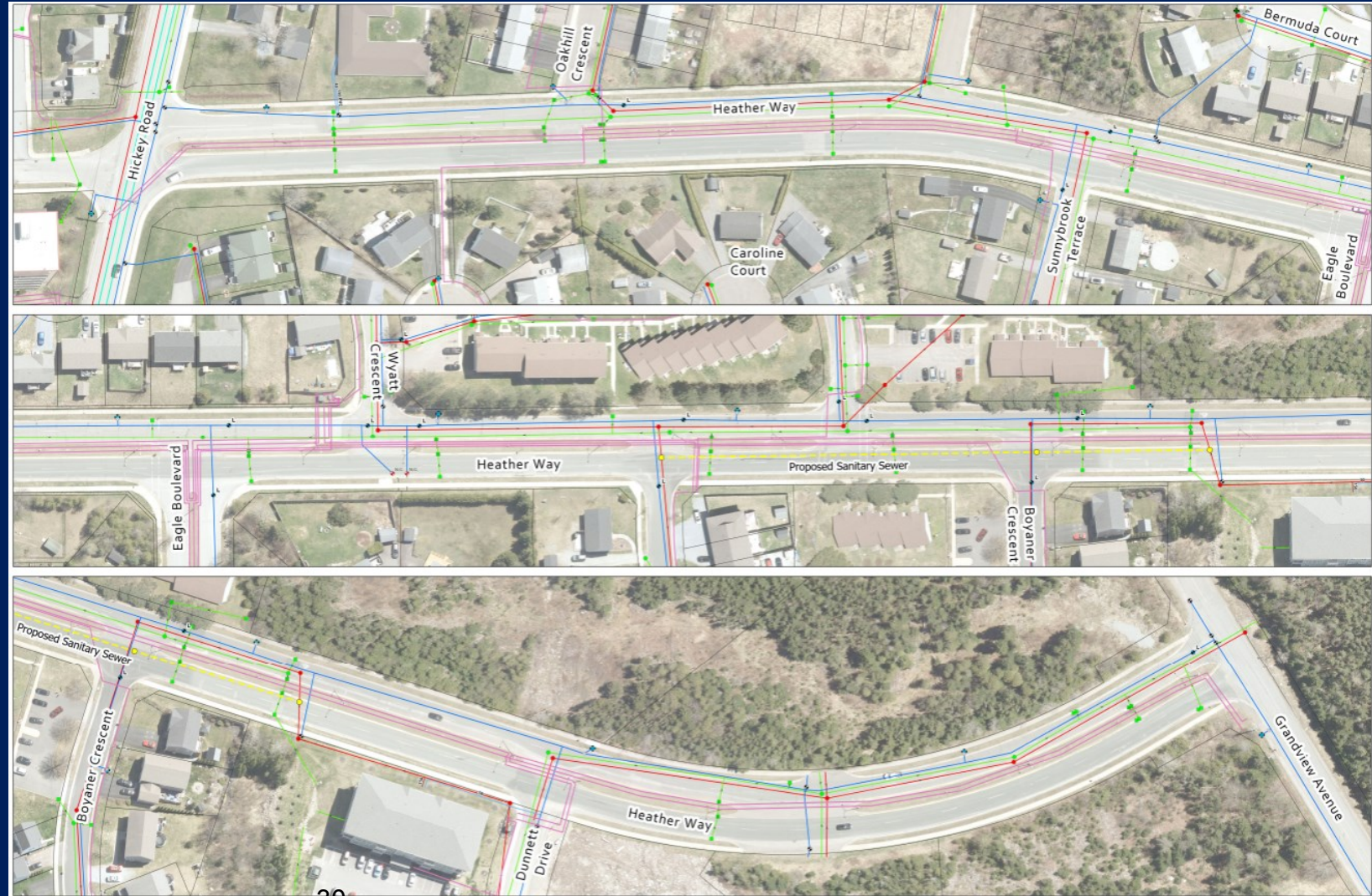
- Common Council's concern with continued investment in unneeded asphalt (vehicle lanes) on Heather Way rooted in addressing City's infrastructure deficit problem
  - City has \$545 Million infrastructure deficit
  - Over 1100 lane KM of roads in Saint John
- Decommissioning infrastructure aligns with plan
  - ... as long as other new costly infrastructure (that also needs to be maintained by the City) doesn't replace it





# Underground Infrastructure

Need to be careful not to build structures over underground pipes or electrical lines, including those on currently closed west side lanes





# Possible Options

With context provided so far, which is the best option for Heather Way?





# Option 1: Two Lanes and Active/Recreation Space

## Pros

- Recreational space provides more value than 4 vehicle lanes
- Aligns with TAC minimum lane width requirements

## Cons

- Does not align with Transportation Plan or General Specifications
- Does not align with Recreation Plan or Asset Management Plan unless community manages recreation space
- Expensive

COST	
Asphalt removed and greening	\$700,000
Active Transportation path	\$520,000
Playground	\$600,000
3rd turn lanes at two ends of street	\$130,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,950,000</b>





# Option 2: Two Wider Lanes and Active/Recreation Space

## Pros

- Recreational space provides more value than 4 vehicle lanes
- Aligns with General Specifications for lane width

## Cons

- Does not align with Transportation Plan
- Does not align with Recreation Plan or Asset Management Plan unless community manages recreation space
- Expensive
- Significant cost to widen lanes

COST	
Asphalt removed and greening	\$700,000
Active Transportation path	\$520,000
Playground	\$600,000
3rd turn lanes at two ends of street	\$130,000
Widen Lanes	\$900,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33 \$2,850,000</b>





# Option 3: Two Lanes, Sell Remaining Land for Housing

## Pros

- City completely divests of most infrastructure
- Lower cost option as long as restoration costs ahead of sale minimal
- Contributes to housing needs

## Cons

- Row housing would contradict lot depth requirements
- No guarantee business case leads to construction
- Acquisition by developers of vacant lands unlikely
- Areas with underground infrastructure need to be avoided
- Would add a large number of driveways to a collector road
- Would require Public Hearing



COST		
3rd turn lanes at two ends of street		\$130,000
Potential restoration costs		\$100,000
<b>Total</b>	34	<b>\$230,000</b>



# Option 4: Restore All Asphalt and Four Driving Lanes

## Pros

- Lower cost option

## Cons

- City does not reduce asphalt infrastructure
- Less valuable use by community
- Over design may encourage cut through traffic

COST	
Resurface west lanes	\$200,000





# Option 5: Restore All Asphalt, Two Driving Lanes and Bike Lanes

## Pros

- Lower cost option

## Cons

- City does not reduce asphalt
- Bike lanes would not align with Transportation Plan
  - University Avenue plan did align with plan



Option would be like University Avenue, pictured here. 1 vehicle lane and 1 bike lane on each side of road.

COST	
Resurface west lanes	\$200,000
Bike lanes	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>

# Community Feedback



Which option do you think is best?

What else should be considered?

Don't forget to fill out survey

- [www.shapeyourcitysaintjohn.ca](http://www.shapeyourcitysaintjohn.ca)
- Hardcopies at Customer Service Centre, City Hall
- Hardcopies here



# Summary of Options

Option 1: Two Lanes and Active/Recreation Space

Option 2: Two Wider Lanes and Active/Recreation Space

Option 3: Two Lanes, Sell Remaining Land for Housing

Option 4: Restore All Asphalt and Four Driving Lanes

Option 5: Restore All Asphalt, Two Driving Lanes and Bike Lanes