

Palliser Trail and Benchlands Overpass Complete Streets Improvements – What We Heard

The town held an open house and conducted an online survey in January 2019 to gather feedback on a conceptual design for Palliser Trail and the Benchlands Trail overpass. The following is a summary of the themes heard, and how that feedback will be incorporated into the work that is planned.

- 1. Maintenance needs for existing infrastructure:** Requests were received related to the need for increased street lighting, and winter maintenance of the existing pathway on the east side of Palliser Trail.

Winter maintenance is a key part of the design and the Public Works team has been involved in the design to make sure that any new infrastructure would be serviceable with equipment. A street lighting design is underway as part of the project to ensure that lighting within the project limits meets recommended levels of lighting for walking, cycling and driving.

- 2. A need for local transit service in the area:** A desire for local transit to service Palliser Trail was requested.

This information has been shared with Roam transit.

- 3. Benchlands Overpass:** Concerns were expressed about reduced capacity on the Benchlands overpass due to the removal of a westbound travel lane, and the loss of storage capacity on the bridge deck when trains are passing through town. Under the current configuration, some vehicles waiting to turn right onto Palliser Trail are blocked by vehicles that are waiting to continue straight during train crossings.

A traffic study was completed as an initial step, prior to the preparation of design options along these corridors. The study looked at existing levels of traffic during the summer months, then added forecasted levels of growth due to increasing development and visitation to the area. Future development, which will feed onto Benchlands Trail and Palliser Trail, was included within the analysis over a 20-year horizon, to ensure that intersection designs and roadway cross-sections would be able to accommodate current traffic volumes in addition to future growth.

4. Overall Project comments: The following is a list of general project comments received:

- Positive comments for the new pathway connections, improved crossings and protected facility on the overpass
- The project is a waste of money as improved walking/cycling facilities will not change how people travel
- Concern that the town is only planning for certain demographics who can walk/cycle
- Questions regarding roundabouts at intersections
- Concern if intersections could accommodate future growth

The 2019 Integrated Transportation Plan outlines the town's future transportation mode shift goals. We are constrained by the amount of space we have to build, if we are to effectively address our transportation needs now and into the future we need to offer people choices in how they travel. The plan is built around the realization that people still need to travel by car some of the time, but allows for choice in travel some of the time. If people choose to travel by alternative modes this will free up space in the transportation network for those that need to drive for all of their trips.

Roundabouts were analyzed as an option for intersection designs, but were not identified as the preferred design due to the requirement for multiple lanes in some directions. This would constrain the space available to add facilities for people walking and cycling on the existing pavement surface, and also result in longer crossing distances at intersections. When warranted by future levels of development, the intersection of Palliser Trail and Silvertip Trail will be upgraded to a signalized intersection, and the left turn bay onto Silvertip Trail will be extended.

5. Pedestrian Overpass of the Trans-Canada Highway: A number of comments were received related to the need for a pedestrian overpass across the Trans-Canada Highway.

The improvements that are planned along Palliser Trail and Benchlands Trail are part of a town-wide network of walking and cycling infrastructure that the Town adopted as part of the 2018 Integrated Transportation Plan. The improvements along Palliser Trail will not replace an overpass/underpass of the TransCanada Highway, which may be looked at as part of a more detailed feasibility study, currently in the 2021 budget (unfunded).

6. Other Projects: Comments were also received related to land use, requests for lighting along the Trans-Canada Highway, and the design suggestions for Railway Avenue and Bow Valley Trail.

While outside the project limits for this work, these comments have been shared with the appropriate areas (including Alberta Transportation) for follow up.