



Staff Report

Department: Environment and Infrastructure
To: Mayor and Members of Council
Meeting Date: March 20, 2024
Report No.: CSR-2024-32
Report Title: Yonge Street Reconstruction Project

Recommendation:

That Staff Report CSR-2024-32, Yonge Street Reconstruction Project, dated March 20, 2024, regarding the bike lanes on Yonge Street be received; and

- 1. That Council direct staff to implement Council's desired bike facility option along Yonge Street as apart of the Yonge Street Reconstruction project; and**
- 2. That Council direct staff to implement the desired guidance for Fourth Street.**

Background:

In July of 2023, the Town retained Tatham Engineering to design the Yonge Street Reconstruction project, between King Street and County Road 93. The project is divided into two phases, with the first phase consisting of a full reconstruction/infrastructure replacement from Second Street to Norene Street and the second phase to replace asphalt only along Yonge (outside of those limits). Funds were approved by Council in 2022 to start the design of this project due to the failing infrastructure along Yonge Street and to follow the Multi Modal Transportation Master Plan (MMTMP) for separated cycling facilities.

In 2019, the Town had updated its MMTMP, with a 10-year outlook on updating road networks, addressing existing challenges and support growth within the Town. The MMTMP identified Yonge Street as notable for active transportation and as a short-term project to upgrade the existing painted bike lanes to a separated bike lane with flex bollards.

In the RFP for the Yonge Street Reconstruction project, one piece of the construction included upgrading the traffic signals at Fourth Street from a pedestrian crossing into a full signalized intersection. Residents along Fourth Street have been consistent with

contacting the Town about speeding and trucks travelling along Fourth Street. Fourth Street is not a truck route, and the Town has made efforts providing adequate signage on Yonge Street, but to no avail.

Analysis:

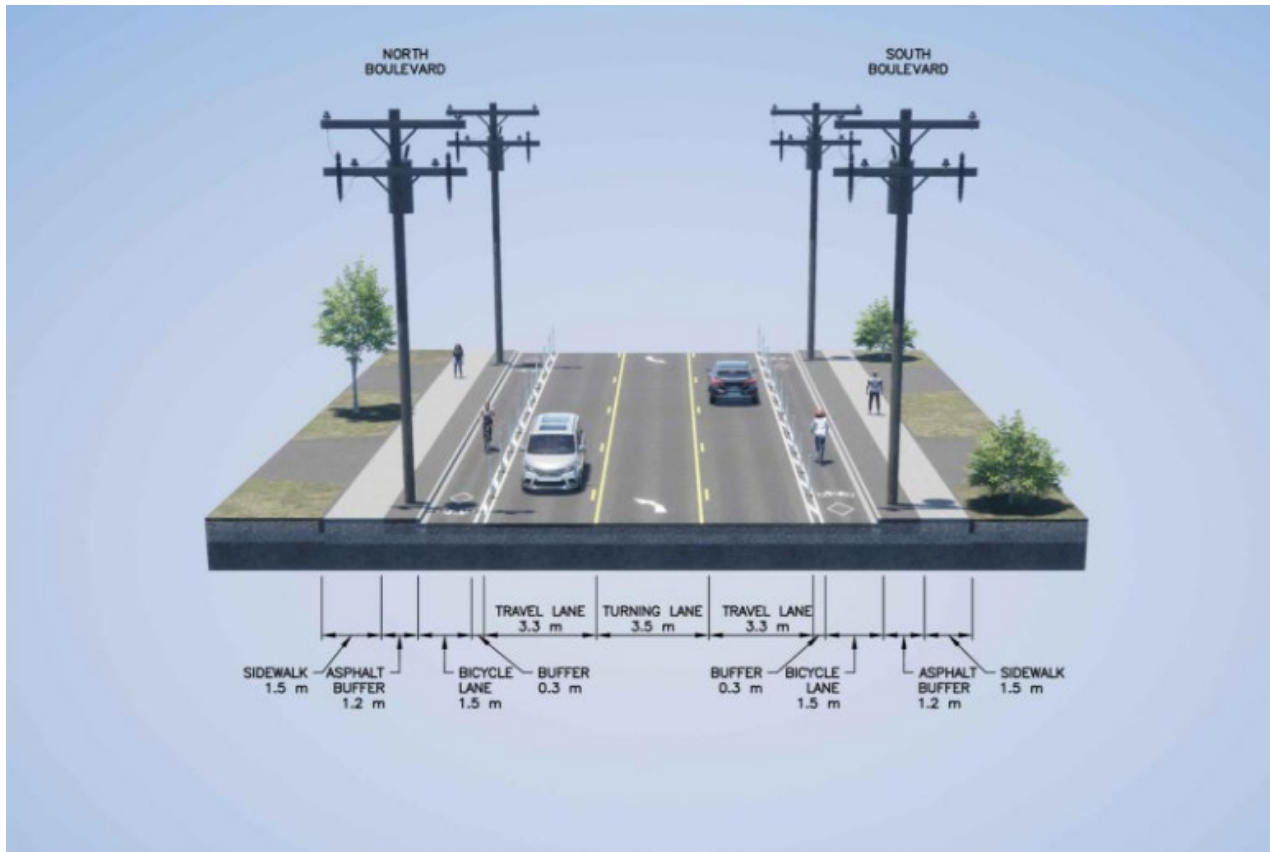
Yonge Street is one of the main arterial roads in Town providing two, 1-way traffic lanes in each direction along with a centre turning lane. From the Town's Engineering Standards, a typical right of way for an arterial road is 30m; however, Yonge Street only has a 20m right of way, posing a significant design constraint for upgrading the current cycling facility to an appropriate separated facility as outlined in the Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 18.

Based on the OTM Book 18 requirements and preferred design options, the ideal cross section would include in boulevard one way cycle tracks and pedestrian sidewalks on both sides of Yonge Street. Due to the reduced right of way, existing utility locations, full reconstruction limits and the desire to maintain existing storm sewer, the implementation of this cross section was deemed not feasible.

As such, the Town's retained Consultant produced 4 designed options for upgrading the cycling facilities along Yonge Street:

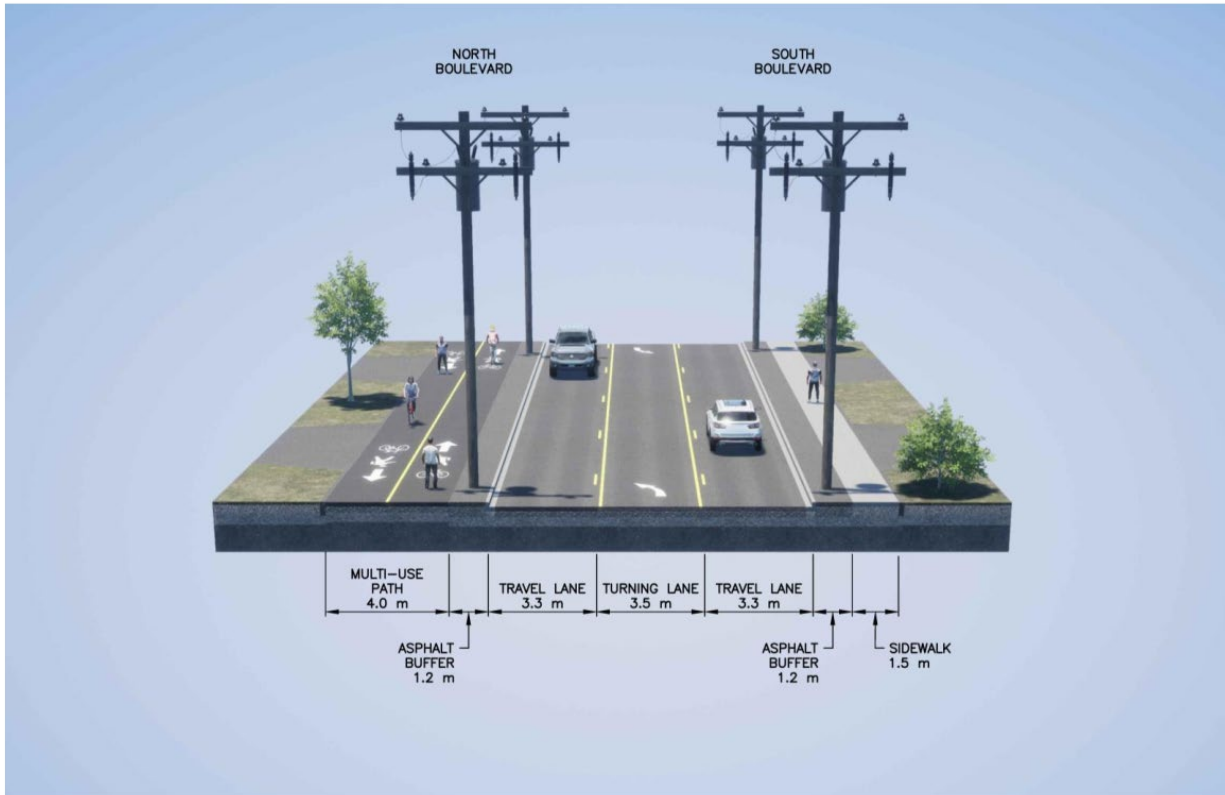
1. Do nothing and reconstruct Yonge Street with the existing cross section.
2. Install flex bollards from County Road 93 to King Street in the eastbound and westbound travel lanes.
3.
 - a. Install an in boulevard multi-use path on the north side of Yonge Street from County Road 93 to Eighth Street. Directing cyclists north to Hugel Ave along Eighth Street or south to the Little Lake Park Trail.
 - b. Install an off road multi-use path on the north side of Yonge Street from County Road 93 to King Street.

Option 2 (flex bollards) would include the installation of a buffer between the vehicle travel lanes and flexible bollards and would classify as physically separate bicycle lanes, which are the minimum requirement for roads with high daily traffic volumes. The flexible bollards are a separation technique that provide a visual indicator to vehicle operators. To accommodate the flex bollards and associated buffers, the drive lane widths will be reduced to the minimum allowable widths per the standards and in some locations the north curb alignment will require modification. The flexible bollards will be removed prior to winter and re-installment in the spring (to avoid snow plow damage). Thus, there are additional maintenance costs for seasonal installation, removal, and replacement of damaged bollards associated with this option. A typical cross-section is illustrated below:



Option 2 – Flex Bollards

The options containing the multi-use path (Options 3a & 3b) would fully remove cyclists from the road; however, would mix pedestrians and cyclists on the same platform. Option 3a would reduce the number of crossings with commercial entrances that could lead to conflicts between cyclists and motorists but would require outlets for cyclists on Eighth Street and in Little Lake Park to be constructed and would remove cyclist access to the Mundy’s Bay Public School. Option 3b would extend to King Street but would require costly utility relocations and construction delays. A typical cross section is illustrated below:



Option 3a and 3b – MUT

On October 11, 2023, the Town and Consultant hosted a Public Information Center (PIC) to provide residents the options for cycling facilities along Yonge Street. Once the PIC concluded, a survey was on the Town's website for two weeks for residents to fill out and provide their feedback for their preferred cycling facility options. Additionally, the Active Transportation Committee and Mundy's Bay School were also consulted outside of the survey.

The Town received 76 survey responses from the PIC. The results are as shown:

- a) 53.9% of respondents chose option 1, do nothing.
- b) 18.4% of respondents chose option 2, flex bollards.
- c) 15.8% of respondents chose option 3b which would be extending a multi use trail from County Road 93 to King Street and;
- d) 11.8% of respondents chose option 3a which would be installing a multi use trail from County Road 93 to Eighth Street.

Option 1 was the highest ranked preference from the survey; however, it does not comply with the OTM Book 18 and differs from the MMTMP recommendation. Due to these factors Staff do not recommend this option as the preferred option.

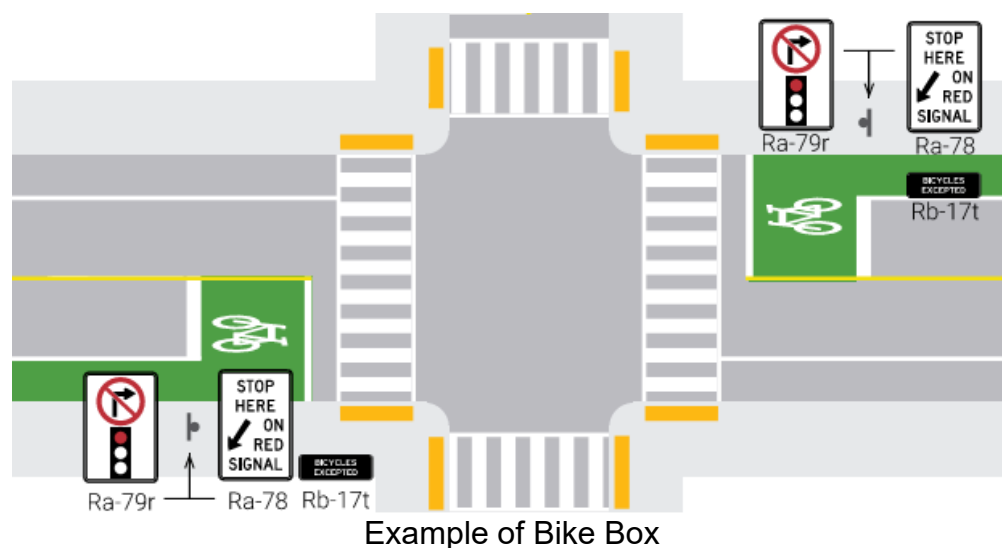
Option 2 is the second highest ranked preference from residents. This option had the support from the Town's Active Transportation Committee as well as being the preferred

option from Mundy's Bay Public School and generally follows the MMTMP recommendations.

Option 3a was the least voted cycling solution. Comments from the survey indicated that residents weren't in favour of ending the multi use path at Eighth Street because the detour (to Hugel and/or Little Lake Park) would be an inconvenience. In addition, the Mundy's Bay Public School, which is located on Yonge Street between Sixth and Seventh Street, advised they wanted a facility for active school travel (and Option 3a would eliminate this).

After reviewing the results of the PIC and consulting with Tatham Engineering, when considering the various constraints, Staff recommend Option 2 as the preferred solution for Yonge Street considering the constraints involved. The option best aligns with the public's opinion while meeting minimum design standards.

The separated cycling facility with flex bollards meets the minimum OTM Book 18 design requirements and is the option provided in the MMTMP. The bollards will provide a visual indicator for vehicles thus providing traffic calming and a sense of safety for cyclists because the separation from the cars will be greater. Recognizing Yonge Street is a truck route and an arterial road, during the detailed design Staff will review options to include other safety features along Yonge Street, where applicable, including painted bike boxes (accommodating left hand cycle turns) and other physical separators (i.e. concrete curb, rubber curb, etc.) where feasible. During the detailed design stage these options will be reviewed with Public Works staff, recognizing they will require removal prior to winter and re-instatement in the Spring.





Example of a curb and flex bollard

Due to the ongoing complaints that the Town receives regarding speeding and truck traffic on Fourth Street two additional questions were asked to residents in the PIC survey surrounding Fourth Street.

1. Would you like Fourth Street to be a one way?
2. If so which direction, would you like to travel in? (North or South)

The results of question 1 (above) was a 50/50 split on whether Fourth Street should be a one way, but the preferred direction was northbound.

One main benefit of a one-way street is that it can help decrease traffic congestion and thus decreasing the noise level. Some disadvantages are increased speed, confused drivers going the wrong directions and residents living on Fourth Street add to their travel time to detour around the one-way direction. One of the largest disadvantageous of making Fourth Street a one-way street is that since it is a collector road there will need to be an opposing direction road designated as a collector roadway to allow traffic to flow in the North/South directions. This would need to be reviewed in much more detail and would typically be reviewed as part of a Transportation Master Plan update. However, this would likely mean re-designating a nearby paralleling local road to a collector road which will have additional disadvantages.

The Town had decreased the speed limit on Fourth Street from Yonge Street to Hugel Avenue from 50km/hr to 40km/hr, due to complaints from residents about high speeding over 5 years ago. To provide traffic calming on Fourth Street, the Town has had a pole mounted traffic speed sign on Fourth Street in both directions for the past few years. The average speed along Fourth Street is approximately 36km/hr with an 85th percentile of 47km/hr. Considering that typically enforcement of speeding doesn't occur until approximately 10 km/h over the posted speed limit and the 85th percentile speed is only 7 km/h over the posted speed limit staff conclude the speeding isn't as big of an issue

along Fourth Street as it is perceived. The average daily volume along Fourth Street is approximately 4000 southbound and 5000 northbound. Fourth Street is a collector road, and the average daily volumes are typical for a normal collector road in Town.

Considering the survey results were split 50/50, Staff recommend leaving Fourth Street as it is today. As part of the Yonge Street Reconstruction project, the pedestrian crossing traffic signal will be removed and the intersection at Yonge Street and Fourth St will be upgraded to a fully signalized intersection to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety from Fourth Street onto Yonge Street.

Stakeholder Consideration/Impacts:

By implementing a separated cycling facility, residents in Town should feel safer knowing there is a physical separation between cars and cyclists. Also, residents and business owners along Yonge Street and cyclists using the bike lanes will know that the Town has taken their considerations from the PIC into the design of the cycling facility.

Options/Alternatives:

Other options would include:

1. Choose Option 1 noted above. Keep the painted bike lanes and repaint areas within the reconstruction limits.
2. Choose Option 3b noted above. Install an off road multi use trail along the north side of Yonge Street between County Road 93 to King Street. (Utility constraints and most expensive option).
3. Choose Option 3a noted above. Install an off road multi use trail along the north side of Yonge Street between County Road 93 to Eighth Street. (Residents least favourite option).
4. Change Fourth Street into a 1 way with vehicles travelling northbound.

Financial Impact:

As part of the 2024 capital budget, Council approved funds for the Yonge Street Reconstruction project which includes completion of the design work and relining of select sanitary sewers ahead of construction. As a result of Council's direction from this report, it will enable Staff and their consultants to complete the detailed design work and produce a detailed cost estimate which will be included in the 2025 Budget Process for approval.

Council's Strategic Priorities:

1. Enhance Town Safety by Improving cycling networks throughout Town and Increasing residents using cycling facilities thus promoting active transportation throughout Town.
2. Infrastructure Management by restoring the conditions of the failing infrastructure.

Conclusions:

Implementation of the preferred option of flex bollards will increase cyclist safety along Yonge Street. By narrowing vehicle travel lanes and providing a physical separator between vehicles and cyclists, the residents should feel comfortable riding along Yonge Street and promoting active transportation throughout Town.

Prepared by: B. Yasher C.E.T., Senior Project Manager

Prepared by: M. Sobil P. Eng., Manager of Engineering

Reviewed by: J. Thompson P.Eng. Executive Director of Environment and Infrastructure

Approved by: R. Bunn, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

1. [PIC Survey Results](#)
2. Mundy's Bay Public School Letter

3. How does Yonge Street impact you?

● A lot. I use Yonge Street daily t...	60
● A little bit. I weekly use forms ...	13
● Minimally. I use forms of trans...	2
● Not at all. I do not use forms ...	0
● Other	1



4. Do you currently use the bike lanes along Yonge Street?

● Yes	23
● No	53



5. Do you think the bike lanes on Yonge Street are safe?

● Yes	14
● No, they can be more safe	36
● Unsure	10
● I have never thought about it	8
● Other	8



6. How do you feel about having no bike lanes from King Street to Eighth Street?

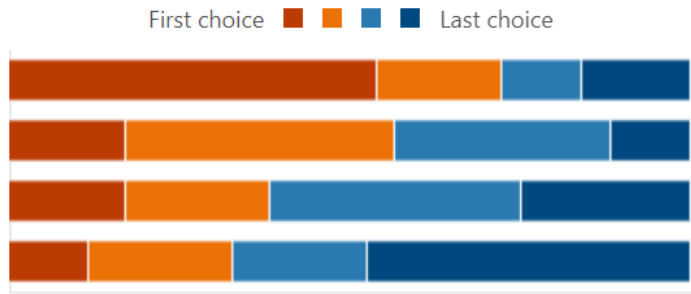
● I do not like this change, I wo...	31
● I would be okay with no bike l...	18
● I do not know how I feel. This ...	17
● I am happy with how the bike ...	4
● Other	6



7. Please rank which option you like to see the Town implement. Please rank from 1 (most preferred) to 5 (least preferred) option.

Rank Options

- 1 Option A - Do not change bik...
- 2 Option B - Add 0.3m buffer wi...
- 3 Option C- Relocate north curb...
- 4 Option D - Relocate north cur...



8. Would you support Fourth Street being a one-way from Yonge Street to Hugel Avenue?

- Yes 38
- No 38



9. Which direction would you like the one-way to be?

- North bound direction (toward...) 25
- South bound direction (toward...) 13





Mundy's Bay Public School

340 Sixth Street, Midland ON, L4R 3Y4

Tel: 705-526-2091 | mun.scdsb.on.ca

Chris Harding
Principal

Cara Thatcher
Vice-Principal

Nov.3, 2023

Bailee Yasher
Senior Project Manager
Town of Midland
575 Dominion Avenue
Midland, ON L4R 1R2

RE: Mundy's Bay Public Schools On the Move Committee

Dear Bailee Yasher:

I am writing this letter to provide input into the Town of Midland's Yonge Street Reconstruction Plan on behalf of Mundy's Bay Public School's On the Move Committee. On the Move is an active school travel initiative whose goal is to support children to increase physical activity to meet the recommendations from the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guideline. On the Move is led by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit in partnership with several local school boards, schools, municipalities, and community partners. Mundy's Bay Public School's On the Move Committee work involves developing and implementing an Active School Travel Plan with the goal of: 1. increasing the number of children using active modes of transportation to and from school; 2. Decreasing traffic congestion at the school; and 3. Increasing the proportion of 'bus zone' students who regularly ride the school bus.

Land use decisions and the way communities are designed have multiple impacts on people's physical health as well as on their mental health and well-being. The physical form of a community affects the quality of the air, physical activity choices, interaction with neighbours, and equitable access to services. It defines the character of a community, impacts real estate values and tax revenues, and influences the community's ability to attract business and residents. When a community embraces active transportation, it creates an environment that is less dependent on automobiles. When there is less reliance on automobiles for getting around, this helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, thus mitigating climate change. Developing safe, convenient and accessible bicycle lanes, sidewalks, trails, parks and public spaces, increases freedom, equitable access for community members of all ages and abilities.

Decisions made regarding Yonge Street Reconstruction will have a direct impact on Mundy's Bay students and families chosen mode of transportation for the school journey. There is concern that Option 3a, that suggests removing the bike lanes from Eighth to King, would eliminate direct, safe cycling access to the school. A disconnected cycling network would likely discourage children from being active and using cycling as a mode of transportation to and from school.

Mundy's Bay Public School's On the Move Committee would like to thank the Town of Midland for providing the opportunity for us to provide feedback related to the Yonge Street Reconstruction Plan. We urge the Council to consider **Option 2 of the Yonge Street Reconstruction Plan** as we believe this is the best viable option to provide safe, connected cycling facilities for the whole length of King Street to Highway 93.

Sincerely,

Chris Harding, Principal
Mundy's Bay Public School
On behalf of the On the Move Committee