

Madame Mayor, Councilors, Staff and fellow concerned citizens, thank you for allowing me to address you again on the matter of sidewalks on Strathcona Drive. My presentation to the Committee of the Whole April 1, 2019 (Appendix A) is attached for background and reference.

The issue of sidewalks proposed in TS-05-19 received a Motion to NOT construct sidewalks on all affected roads in the catchment area other than Strathcona Drive. I trust Council will approve this Motion, **supporting the wishes of the majority of those affected residents.**

This leaves only Strathcona Drive to be dealt with.

In drafting this presentation I went through various iterations, from “snarling attack dog” to “bare knuckled back-alley brawler” to what hopefully will present my thoughts as “rational but impassioned”.

The current Motion, if passed in favor of Option 6 (sidewalks), could be perceived as a negative result, potentially being viewed as pitting “The City” against “The Residents”.

By voting YES to Option 4 Council has the opportunity to change this negative to a positive and create a “win-win-win” for all concerned.

By voting YES to Option 4 you will create a WIN for our City Administration, allowing them to proceed with this much needed road reconstruction while saving some \$700,000 in budgeted costs. These funds could be redeployed to other currently unfunded projects.

A YES vote to Option 4 is also a WIN for the Administration as it will remove the burden and cost of maintaining these sidewalks in the future.

By voting YES to Option 4 our Council WINS on multiple layers:

A YES vote to Option 4 is a WIN that shows that Council is listening to the citizens of Burlington, delivering on campaign promises to respond positively to the wishes of the majority of the Citizens, reversing the past “Top Down” approach to government, and providing a sense of empowerment to the electorate.

A YES vote to Option 4 is a WIN that will go a long way to rebuilding trust between City Hall and the Public by including residents in shaping decisions.

A YES vote to Option 4 is a WIN that will send a strong message to the Province. In times of impending budget cuts and with suggestions of amalgamation looming, you will deliver a clear signal that Burlington can, and will, operate on a cost effective and efficient basis as a stand-alone entity.

A YES vote to Option 4 is a WIN for the significant majority of Strathcona Gardens residents that have come together as a community and passionately expressed their opinions on this issue.

This evening you will see and hear a number of presentations that will more eloquently than I portray both the statistical data collected by the presenters and the emotional views of the area residents. I will defer to them to help convince you to vote against the construction of sidewalks on Strathcona Drive.

I reiterate my position as being opposed to sidewalks being constructed on Strathcona Drive and respectfully request Council to support Option 4, the NO Sidewalk option.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue. I would be pleased to answer any questions the Mayor and Councilors may have.

Appendix A:

By way of introduction, my name is Don Matthews and my wife and I reside on Strathcona Drive. We are newcomers, having been here just a year. We are here by design rather than by default. We could have located anywhere in the GTHA but chose Burlington for its livability and particularly Strathcona Gardens for its neighbourhood charm, which now may be changed for the worse.

As the original Motion in front of Council is subject to change I will direct my comments to the new Motion being brought forward by Councillor Stolte.

I direct Council to the content of this Motion.

Councillor Stolte's Proposal

To that end, I am bringing forward the following motion to Committee of the Whole on Monday April 1, 2019;
Approve the construction of a sidewalk only on the east side of Strathcona Drive with construction starting at the existing curb with absolute minimal impact to existing driveways, trees and green infrastructure as shown in proposed cross section option 6; and
Direct that construction of the sidewalk on Strathcona Drive not be subject to local improvement charges, as per Local Improvement by-law 49-2017; and
Direct that the reduction of the budget for this Capital project not occur until after the tender award to accommodate the road regrading and design work that has not been accounted for within this new proposal.

Following the Public Information Centre and citizen feedback period, the city received **111 responses** from a total of 453 homes in the affected area. At the time of the survey, with only 4 options originally presented, the results indicated that **72** respondents were NOT in favor of any sidewalk installation in the neighbourhood while **39** respondents WERE in favor of sidewalks in some capacity.

There were a total of **10** respondents who initially indicated that they were not in support of the sidewalk options provided, but **WOULD BE** in support of an alternative option of sidewalks on one side of Strathcona only if this were possible.

This displays the flawed nature of the PIC survey. Staff at the PIC were very condescending on the issue of the options presented stating "they didn't want to confuse people". What this did was pre-load the potential responses and inadvertently cause confusion.

This brought the community response to a total of **62** (56%) NO compared to **49** (44%) YES of the total 453 homes surveyed.

This is a clear majority against sidewalks, including Strathcona Drive. Published figures show 28 responses from Strathcona Drive out of 69 properties or 40.5% of the affected properties, slightly higher than the overall turnout in the 2018 Municipal election and considerably higher than the total response rate of 24%. This demonstrates the concern voiced by those directly affected.

Of the 28 responses received from Strathcona Drive residents 21 were against sidewalks on Strathcona Drive, an overwhelming 75% of those DIRECTLY impacted by this proposal versus the 56% overall survey count.

It is important that city staff and Council engage the public to understand that this process of requesting input and comments is not a "voting process" where the "majority wins", rather a process of engaging opinions that will ultimately be considered very carefully along with a number of other issues that Council needs to consider.

The Mayor and Council are elected by a majority vote and if this Motion proceeds it will be settled by a simple majority. The issues at hand were provided to the electorate at the PIC for "careful consideration" and the majority of respondents were against sidewalks.

Is it being suggested that Council NOT respect the wishes of the electorate?

What are the "other issues" that Council needs to consider in this matter?

The proposal at hand is a unilateral motion to Council that counters the wishes of the electorate, was not discussed with the electorate and was only made public March 29 via the Councillor's newsletter, which does not reach all affected parties. This does not provide ample time for discussion and input which is, in my opinion, improper.

Rationale:

Strathcona Drive provides a direct connection between Lakeshore Road and New Street and is in close proximity to several significant pedestrian generators, namely:

- Strathcona Park;
- St. Raphael Catholic Elementary School;
- St. Raphael Roman Catholic Parish;
- Burlington Transit Routes 4, 10, 50 and 301 via a transit stop located at the intersection of New Street and Strathcona Drive; and
- A local community shopping center, coffee shops and restaurants.

I fully understand and appreciate that this option will be disappointing many of the households in the neighbourhood who strongly advocated for NO SIDEWALKS at all, but I strongly believe that this amended Option 6 will be:

- less disruptive to character of neighbourhood
- supports our commitment to the Active Aging Plan, the creation of a walkable city and the concepts of complete streets
- maintains green infrastructure and protects the urban tree canopy by saving 27 trees that will not need to be removed, as well as protecting green, permeable landscaping which is critical for flood mitigation and general health and well-being
- answers a minimal degree of increase to pedestrian safety while supporting active modes of transportation and encouragement of alternate modes of transportation
- looks forward to future generations being less car focused and begins to alter “car focused behaviour”
- proven health benefits of promoting walking and biking
- citizens have requested more stop signs and speed bumps on Strathcona for traffic calming measures...narrowing of Strathcona with this design will affect some of this benefit.
- Will dramatically reduce (if not eliminate) the \$681,000 Capital expenditure as we will be replacing asphalt with sidewalk, rather than in addition to.

The rationale provided above does not address the concerns of the affected residents. The broad statements made are not factually supported and provide platitudes rather than meaningful data.

What is the proposed sidewalk width? The Sidewalk Design, Construction and Maintenance Issue No 1.0 Publication Date: July 2004 © 2004 Federation of Canadian Municipalities and National Research Council suggests “best practice” is a minimum 1.8 m wide when sidewalks are constructed adjacent to the curb where a fire hydrant is present, as it is on Strathcona Drive.

I note that in one response from the City that the proposed sidewalk width will be 1.5m versus the “best practice” of 1.8m., WHY?

Has this proposal been vetted by Fire and Police departments where narrower streets may have a negative impact on fire and rescue operations? The Ontario Fire Department Fire Protection Standard requires a minimum 26 feet curb to curb road width where a fire hydrant is in place, as it is on Strathcona Drive. Is this proposal in compliance with this?

What will happen to on-street parking due to the narrower roadway?

Is there any factual data that the proposed design will “affect some benefit” for traffic calming versus stop signs and speed bumps?

There is no supporting data regarding “dramatically reduce (if not eliminate) the capital expenditure”. Has this been costed out with Public Works?

The foregoing proposed Motion appears to reflect the personal opinion of our Councilor, which I respect, and should be put forward as a private citizen.

But I remind our Councilors that your role as a public persona on Council is to ensure that the issues concerning the residents in their wards are voiced.

The residents of the area have voiced their opinion in the negative to the sidewalk proposal and that, I believe, is the mandate that should be brought to Council.

Given that there are many unresolved issues surrounding this proposed Motion I respectfully request that it NOT be put forward until it is properly vetted, supported by facts, costed, and reviewed in its entirety and that the pending original motion be shelved until this is completed.

Appendix B for future consideration - Signage

This whole catchment area should have new signage erected clearly indicating that pedestrians may be present on the roadway – this could be satisfied by posting signage like this throughout the neighbourhood:



The signage could be modified to read something such as "Be aware and drive accordingly" in lieu of the SLOW graphic.