



**SUBJECT: St. Luke's Window to the Lake opportunity**

**TO: Committee of the Whole**

**FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture**

Report Number: RCC-08-24

Wards Affected: 2

Date to Committee: May 13, 2024

Date to Council: May 21, 2024

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### **Recommendation:**

Authorize the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services to collaborate with St. Luke's Church on the feasibility of a new publicly accessible walkway from Elgin Street to Lakeshore on the Boulevard as outlined in recreation, community and culture department report RCC-08-24.

### **PURPOSE:**

#### **Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

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### **Background and Discussion:**

St. Luke's Anglican Church is located on the north side of Elgin Street between Nelson Avenue and Burlington Street in downtown Burlington. Directly across from the church, is a long narrow stretch of land that is owned in part by the City and the Church. Refer to Appendix A – Context Map. Since the original construction of the church in 1834, this long stretch of land that extends from the south side of Elgin Street to Lakeshore Road has provided an uninterrupted view to Lake Ontario and any changes to this landscape, in recent years, have been at the surface level only in order to protect this significant view corridor.

The Church has approached the ward Councillor and City staff to see if there is an interest in working together to build an accessible public walkway from Elgin to Lakeshore which would span across lands owned by both the City and the Church. The lands owned by the Church are referred to as “Church Avenue”.

This concept is sound however, one of the biggest challenges with this idea is that the city-owned lands to the north currently support the parking lot driveway entrance into Lot #10. The driveway is a physical barrier to safe pedestrian movement through Church Avenue.

Since the City owns the lands in the former Hydro/Rail Corridor between Church Avenue and Nelson Avenue, it is possible to relocate the parking lot #10 driveway entrance to Nelson Avenue and eliminate all vehicular traffic in Church Avenue. This would free up the landscape for pedestrian-only movement and use of the space. Refer to Appendix B – Driveway Relocation and Proposed Walkway Plan.

After some initial meetings, staff feel that this is a great opportunity to explore and would like Council’s support and direction to proceed further with the proposal.

### **Strategy/process/risk**

Additional staff will be brought into this process to address risk and operational concerns including:

- Reality staff
- Transportation staff
- Community Engagement and Communication staff
- Legal staff
- Roads, Parks, and Forestry staff

Staff will need to determine what items the City needs to have in place to mitigate any liability concerns about the walkway if we enter into a formal agreement with the Church.

### **Options Considered**

Staff could have chosen not to entertain this opportunity and leave any redevelopment completely to the Church to navigate on their own. However, staff feel that having an accessible walkway on this piece of property is ideal to meeting the needs from Vision to Focus by enhancing the Integrated Mobility Plan, protecting the natural environment, connecting the downtown to the waterfront.

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### **Financial Matters:**

NA at this time.

### **Other Resource Impacts**

Staff from Legal, Transportation, Roads, Parks and Forestry, Reality Services, Risk Management, Engineering, Recreation Community and Culture, Communications and Engagement will be required to support this initiative.

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### **Climate Implications:**

An outdoor space is subjected to all types of weather. Currently the space has a number of large mature trees that provide a great cooling canopy in the summer, but also subject to damage from high winds and infestations.

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### **Engagement Matters:**

Staff will work with the Church to engage with residents abutting the property and condominium boards impacted by the change in the access to parking lot #10.

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### **Conclusion:**

St. Luke's Church and the City, own a great window to the lake known as Church Avenue. The church would like to add a publicly accessible walking path on the property as an active modal option from the downtown to the lake. The space will be inviting by providing a cooling aspect because of the tree canopy in the summer and further opportunities for animation as the church secures additional funding for future projects. This is a great opportunity for the City to consider and through a small investment makes this vision a reality.

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Respectfully submitted,

Denise Beard  
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**Appendices:**

- A. Church Avenue – Context Map
- B. Driveway Relocation and Proposed Walkway

**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.