

The official size of Connecting Link Project announced

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Staff

The official size of the Connecting Link Project for the main street of Bancroft was announced during a meeting of the Downtown Enhancement Committee on Thursday, Feb. 17. During the town staff's project update to the committee the staff stated that the project would now run from the corner of Bridge Street to the corner of Madawaska Street. "We have had the full scope of the project presented to us several times. The last time being our last meeting in December. Since that time Perry [Kelly] and Malcolm [Hunt] and our engineer [Basterfield and Associates] have been working diligently on this and to no surprise have discovered that the costing to do the entire project comes a fair bit over budget. Which we kind of somewhat anticipated due to the fact that when we started this project we had not included the sidewalks, and moved on to include the sidewalks to it, so it makes sense that the project would be shortened," explained Mayor Paul Jenkins. Hunt, who is the town's community development adviser, gave the presentation saying that the project will still be a full and comprehensive reconstruction of main street within the new boundaries and will include the sidewalks, curb lines replacement with full decorative lighting for both roadway lighting and sidewalk lighting, a decorative concrete amenity strip and softer streetscape elements such as greenscaping.

"It is a comprehensive renewal of the prime commercial corridor in town and includes completely the historic part and moving through the first block of what I call the future expansion of the downtown commercial core moving north of Station Street where some large vacant properties still exist. That is the future growth and potential of the downtown core as Bancroft matures," said Hunt.

Hunt went on to say that the entire project area, all the way up to Bancroft Sport and Marine, has been fully designed. This has allowed the staff to refine the project area with the estimated costs. "The next time that there is Connecting Link Funding available, the town is really well positioned to know exactly the cost that will unfold and the detailed design completed for it," says Hunt. The project set to start this summer includes the total removal of the asphalt road surface, reinforced pavement structure using a geotextile which is permeable fabric that have the ability to separate, filter, reinforce, and protect the soil, while draining water from the surface, there will also be a new asphalt surface. The sidewalks will also be realigned and re-enforced to help with water drainage as well as provide pedestrians with better walkways throughout town, especially those with mobility issues.

The town will also be fully replacing the lighting system throughout the project area from Bridge Street to Madawaska

Street. The lighting system will have smart lighting capabilities. This means that the town will be able to monitor and adjust the street lighting and pedestrian lighting in real time using a computer system. The Flint St. Square, which is becoming known as Ribbon Park, will also be part of the project. Hunt said that it will include seating and shade sails, lighting columns and interpretive displays showing the geological significance of Bancroft. "It is really the full renewal treatment that we've talked about and never knew if we could get to this caliber of reconstruction project but we are there," said Hunt.

The project has not been tendered for bids by contractors, so full financial costs are not known yet. However, it is expected to be fully covered by the Connecting Link Project Funding so that there is no cost to the town. The town received \$2,186,279 in funding in July 2020 from the Ministry of Transportation's 2020-2021 Connecting Link Program to complete this project. Manager of public works Perry Kelly said that he is hoping to have the tender sent out by the end of the month for contractors to bid on so that the construction can start in May. He plans to have construction to be from May to June, then during the busy summer months of July and August, move the construction off of the busy main road to other areas of the project. Then construction will return to the main road after the Labour Day long weekend. His goal is to do the paving of the main road all in one 12 to 14 hour shift. This way there would be no break or seam in the concrete and it would limit issues for both travellers and businesses.