

STAFF REPORT: Engineering & Public Works Department

REPORT TO: Infrastructure and Recreation Committee
MEETING DATE: November 9, 2010
REPORT NO.: EPW.10.097
SUBJECT: Mill Street – Stop-Up and Close Consideration

PREPARED BY: Reg Russwurm, Director of Engineering and Public Works

A. Recommendations

THAT Council direct Staff to initiate the public process to consider the permanent closure of Mill Street from Bridge Street to the Georgian Trail as outlined in Report EPW.10.097: Mill Street – Stop-Up and Close Consideration.

B. Background

The Town is undertaking the construction of the new Town Hall on the north west corner of Bridge Street and Mill Street in Thornbury along with parkland and parking improvements on the east side of Mill Street. Refer to Attachment 1 for a location map. The work also includes the reconstruction of Mill Street from Bridge Street to the Georgian Trail at a reduced width.

Staff feel that consideration of whether or not to permanently stop-up and close Mill Street adjacent to the new Town Hall is warranted for at least the following reasons in no order:

1. The road standard is reduced to permit perpendicular parking and traffic calming.
2. The configuration of parking, parkland, and Town Hall plus the anticipated increased pedestrian use raises concerns in conjunction with a through road.
3. There is a viable option along Elgin Street for local traffic to reach Highway 26.
4. The costs to reconstruct the retaining wall are avoided. (Currently estimated at \$200,000 in the Development Charges background study.)

The portion of Mill Street under consideration for closure is already subject to a temporary closure to facilitate the construction of the new Town Hall. From this experience, there has been little adverse feedback to Staff from the public. The by-law permitting this temporary closure will expire on December 15th. At present, there are no plans to request an extension as long as the work can be completed on schedule.

After Council endorsement to consider the closure, the next step in the process is to hold a public meeting to gain the opinion of affected residents and others. A package will be prepared outlining the reasons for considering the closure along with the various factors that will go into the decision. Those factors will include the requirement for an

emergency connection between the closed and opened sections of Mill Street, added vehicle travel distance, pedestrian connections, and Town cost implications. The package will be disbursed or otherwise made available to the property owners directly affected by the closure and other interested parties. Individual notices will be sent to affected owners on the north side of Highway 26 as well as advertisements in the local papers, on the Town's website and in social media.

There is no expectation that the road allowance will be transferred out of the public domain because the land is adjacent to the Town Hall and other Town property. In addition, a corridor is required for public utilities.

If there is a positive public response to the closure and the cost implications to the Town are acceptable, a by-law will be prepared to formalise permanent closure upon Council approval.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

Town's Strategic Plan Goal # 2 "Addressing the Town's Municipal Infrastructure needs" is in part satisfied by the recommended action.

D. Environmental Impacts

None

E. Budget Impact

The consideration for the stop-up and close of Mill Street adjacent to the Town Hall site has little cost implications other than Staff time and communication efforts such as advertisement and mailing. These costs will be funded from Road Operating Budget.

The larger cost implications will come if the road is closed because any improvement costs will then be funded from taxation and not as currently slated from Development Charges. The retaining wall will become a liability for the Town however it is expected that the wall will be stable for over 15 years and that the life of the wall will be extended if the traffic load adjacent to the wall is eliminated. When the wall is replaced, there will be more options to replacing the wall without significantly impacting the neighbouring property owner if there is no need to provide for through traffic.

With the closing of Mill Street, the Town can explore options to re-direct the Development Charge allocation to an equal project. A clear opportunity is Elgin Street between Huron Street and Park Street since traffic warranting the improvements to Mill Street will now travel along Elgin Street.

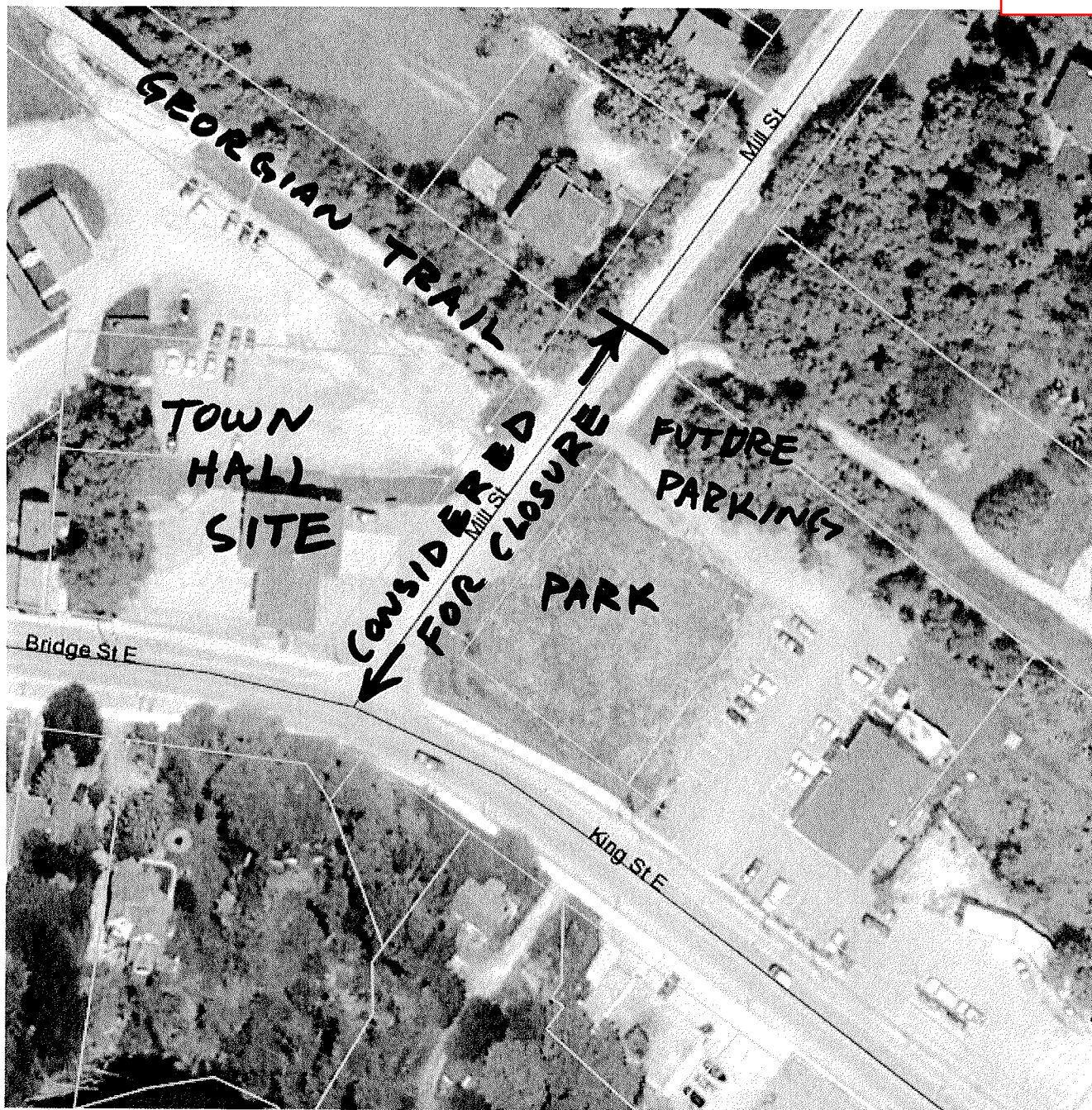
F. Attached

1. Location Map: Mill Street, Bridge Street to Bay Street.

Respectfully submitted,

Reg Russwurm

Reg Russwurm
Director of Engineering and Public Works



The Blue Mountains

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