



Development Services Staff Report

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Report Title: West Montrose Covered Bridge
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Reviewed By: Jeremy Vink, Manager of Planning
Final Review: Senior Management Team

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Township of Woolwich, in accordance with Report DS29-2024 , direct staff to proceed with the process to consider amendments to the Heritage Designation By-law 60-2007 respecting the West Montrose Covered Bridge as it relates to the proposed rehabilitation, which includes amending the appropriate by-law and providing a 'Notice of proposed amendment' as prescribed under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Background:

The West Montrose Covered Bridge must undergo rehabilitation to ensure the safety of the structure and its users. The bridge was built in 1881 and designated on March 14th, 2007. It is Ontario's last remaining covered bridge and an integral part of Woolwich landscape.

In 2023, it was identified that the bridge needed to be rehabilitated. Six proposed rehabilitation alternatives were evaluated based on structural integrity, heritage, cost and social environment, to determine the preferred option. The preferred alternative was recommended by the Township of Woolwich Heritage Committee, involving the removal and replacement of several heritage attributes which include:

- the existing steel Bailey truss;
- deteriorated wooden truss members and bridge elements; and,
- the reinforcing of selected members to accommodate a 10-tonne design vehicular live load.

The current by-law and existing heritage attributes can be found in Attachment 2 of this report. Photos depicting the preferred rehabilitation alternative can be found in Attachment 3 and the preferred height restriction bar chosen by the public in Attachment 4.

Comments:

In November of last year, staff began to work with the Region to consider addressing the amendments to the Heritage Designation By-law 60-2007 to allow for the rehabilitation of the West Montrose Bridge. A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was requested by staff to determine the potential impacts of the changes on the existing heritage attributes with respect to the bridge and the surrounding area. The Region has provided a HIA to rehabilitate the bridge, which has been reviewed by the Heritage Committee.

To proceed with the rehabilitation of the bridge, the current heritage attributes in the by-law will need to be amended, following the process required by the Ontario Heritage Act, and approved by Council. It is requested that staff be directed to proceed through the process below to amend the designated by-law.

1. If Council wishes to proceed with amending the designation, a 'Notice of proposed amendment' must be published in a newspaper and served on the owner of the property (i.e., the Region of Waterloo) and the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT).
2. If no objections are filed within 30 days Council can decide on whether to pass the amending by-law or to withdraw the 'Notice of proposed amendment'.
3. If the amending by-law is passed a copy of the amending by-law and a notice of appeal rights must be published in a newspaper and served on the owner of the property, anyone who objected, and the OHT.
4. If no appeals are filed within 30 days, the amending by-law comes into force and the amending by-law is registered on title and a copy is served to the OHT.

Interdepartmental Impacts:

None.

Financial Impacts:

Costs to advertise the notice of proposed amendment and notice of appeal rights for the ensuing by-law along with associated mailings (estimated \$2000.00).

Conclusion:

Staff recommends Council to direct staff to proceed with the process to amend Heritage Designation By-law 60-2007 for the West Montrose Covered Bridge Rehabilitation. Staff will require an estimated 2 months to complete the next steps and will return to Council in November, 2024.

List of Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Current Heritage By-law

Attachment 3 – Recommended Rehabilitation Alternative Renderings

Attachment 4 – South End – Oversized Vehicle Restriction Concept