

High Street Revitalization and Cenotaph Upgrades

**Public Feedback Summary Presentation
October 28, 2024**

Project Overview

- Community vision for a better balance between all types of users, modes of travel and streetscaping improvements.
- Burnside hired to advance the concept plan commissioned by the Southampton Business Improvement Area (SBIA) by applying engineering design and to solicit further feedback from the community to develop a 'best fit' solution for High Street.
- To develop a final plan that achieves positive change for residents and businesses, enhance the visitor experience, and help make High Street a year-round destination.
- The project scope includes upgrades to the Cenotaph and consultation with invested groups and the public.

Public Engagement – PIC

- PIC held on July 4, 2024, at the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre.
- It provided an opportunity for residents to review preliminary design plans.
- 110 people signed-in and comment sheets were provided.
- Lots of discussion about the positive aspects and potential negative impacts of the proposed design features on regular users and businesses.
- Following the PIC, The Town webpage was updated to share the information with the community and provide opportunities for further feedback.

Public Feedback Opportunities

- Five (5) platforms were offered to express opinions on the preliminary design concept.
- Feedback was collected and analyzed, and results summarized to share the results with stakeholders.
- The information is being used to help make decisions and design revisions that will drive meaningful action for making positive, practical, and effective change.

Public Feedback Opportunities

Summary of Public Feedback Opportunities			
Platform		Dates Information Collected	# of Responses Received
1	Comment Sheets	July 4 to July 25	58
2	Emails	July 4 to Sept. 4	63
3	Comments Online	July 1 to July 30	180
4	Survey Questionnaire Online	Aug. 24 to Sept. 4	111
5	Flashvote Survey Online	Aug. 20 to Aug. 22	889

Analyzing the Feedback

- Developing a 'best fit' design solution is a process of 'designing with,' rather than 'designing for' by evaluating design options and competing concerns, establishing compromises, and developing a solution that addresses the needs and desires of the community.
- Feedback from the 5 different platforms was reviewed by Burnside and Town staff. The message was consistent with the feedback we heard at the PIC.
- The key takeaways to focus on and improve upon moving forward include Parking Capacity, Road Safety and Streetscaping/ Sidewalk Upgrades.

Parking Capacity Feedback

- A majority visit downtown more than once a week (66%).
- 90% of people drive when visiting.
- About half of the people usually cannot find available parking within a block of their specific point of destination.
- Too many parking spaces are being removed.
- Curb extensions need to be reduced where they impact parking.
- Accessible parking is important.
- Designated motorcycle/ scooter parking is a good idea if it does not replace car parking.

Road Safety Feedback

- All way stop control is well supported provided no additional stop conditions are added between intersections.
- Designated loading zones would help keep delivery vehicles from blocking through lanes.
- Cycling delineation on the road and signage would encourage drivers to slow down and be more careful when backing out of parking spaces.
- Pedestrian crossings at intersections should be made safer and more visible to drivers.
- Reduce posted speed limit from 40 km/hr. to 30 km/hr.
- Road repairs are required.

Streetscaping and Sidewalk Upgrade Feedback

- One third of people also walk and/ or bike to the downtown core.
- Sidewalk repairs are required and need to look better.
- More outdoor seating/ benches.
- Add trees and other beautification upgrades.
- More bike racks.

Consultation with the SBIA

- The design team and Town staff met with SBIA Committee to present the feedback results.
- The meeting confirmed the need to mitigate negative issues and concerns but still make positive changes for all users and modes of travel and improve beautification within the core.

What we Heard

- Main concern – Existing parking opportunities on High Street are limited.
- Design changes need to be made to mitigate the loss of parking spaces.
- Make streetscaping upgrades including street furniture and landscaping and other improvements including repairs to the road and sidewalks.

Next Steps

- The design is being modified by Burnside and Town staff to address the main concern (loss of parking spaces) but still to improve the look and experience of the downtown for all users.
- Revised plans will be posted on Engage Saugeen Shores in early November.
- Burnside and Town staff follow up meeting with SBIA to review revised plans and seek their endorsement.
- Presentation of final design at Council Meeting on November 25th.

Cenotaph Upgrades

Project Overview

- Cenotaph site and elements are part of the High Street revitalization project.
- Burnside was retained to investigate the life cycle of the cairn and cross in their present location and investigate the desire of the Southampton Community regarding this feature.
- The end goal is to obtain instructions from Town Staff through Council direction on where the cenotaph and features can be upgraded through meaningful public consultation and input from the Legion Branch 155.

Public Engagement

- At the Public Information Centre (PIC) Burnside showed the following four (4) proposed versions of the cenotaph elements and site for review and discussion:
- Option 1 – Rebuild/Restore the Existing Cairn and Cross
- Option 2A – Proposed 2 Stone Columns (previously presented by the Cenotaph Committee)
- Option 2B – Proposed 2 Stone Columns with Existing Cairn and Cross (previously presented to Council by the Cenotaph Committee)
- Option 3 – Rebuild/Restore the Existing Cairn and Cross with a Memorial Wall (as discussed in a focus meeting convened by the Mayor with the Legion and Cenotaph Committee, Town staff and Burnside on June 27, 2024).

Public Feedback Opportunities

The community was provided with comment sheets to document and quantify their opinions and preferences, as follows:

1. Comment Sheets

Comments sheets were collected between July 4th and July 25th. 91 sheets were received.

2. Petition

During this engagement period, a Southampton Cenotaph Preservation Petition was initiated by a resident group. A total of 577 signatures were collected and shared with Town staff. The petition was to preserve and restore the Carin and Cross in their present state.

Analyzing the Feedback and What We Heard

- Doing the “right thing” was the general message received.
- Summary of our analysis of the feedback from the 91 returned comment sheets.
- Option 1 – 49%
- Option 2A – 23%
- Option 2B – 2%
- Option 3 – 26%

Feedback Summary

The following are some of the key comments received:

- Rebuild the cairn as is to remember the men who built the cenotaph and gave their lives for freedom
- Preserves the history and shows respect and honour
- Remove the illuminated cross as it is historically inaccurate
- Canadian soldiers fought for country not religious reasons
- Lots of non-Christian members of community, as well as passed family members that fought in the war
- Enemy soldiers were also Christian
- Consult with living family members of those whose names are on the Cenotaph
- Safety concern with having enough space to stand and reflect by Cenotaph
- Benches in behind Cenotaph for meditation and reflection
- Incorporate the cross with the cairn instead of the standing illuminated cross
- Or use different symbology such as wreath of maple leaves
- Memorial wall is a great idea and way of recognizing the people who gave their lives for peace (names on plaques)
- Consider involving the Saugeen First Nations stone masons to rebuild the cairn using the “dry wall” method
- Keep the cross as it represents important things that are not religious
- The cross in Flanders fields
- An upside-down sword used to mark the grave of a warrior
- Associated with Remembrance Day
- Contemplation garden added instead of forecourt for reflection
- Only 8 of 58 Saugeen Shores men have their name on the Vimy Memorial, can use this cenotaph to add missing names

Meeting with the Legion

- On September 10th, the design team had a virtual meeting with the President and two representatives from the Legion to present the feedback.

Next Steps

- Strong message to retain the Cenotaph features in their present forms and composition with refurbishment and updates to the plaque contents.
- On September 20, Burnside sent our structural engineer to review and assess the conditions of the cairn and cross and reported back that the cairn appears to be stable and may require some repair and maintenance.
- The design team and Town staff will make any final adjustments to a revised design and accommodation to the overall High Street design following this Council meeting.