



Downtown Deep Utility Replacement Project **Information Package**

This provides an overview of the replacement of aging downtown deep utilities and roads on North Railway Street from McRae Street to Poplar Avenue. The decision to begin this construction so quickly is to have this required infrastructure replacement project completed while downtown businesses are closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, events are cancelled and traffic volumes are reduced.

These necessary upgrades, which will be completed in phases, are part of the Town's ongoing efforts to help improve the downtown, support economic recovery and growth, and ensure that infrastructure is reliable. With the Province announcing the re-launch strategy, some businesses may start to open as early as May 14. With this, and all project considerations in mind, the Town will work closely with the River District Business Association, area businesses, residents and other stakeholders to address concerns, minimize impacts and, if necessary, adjust the project timelines based on feedback.

Continuing to invest in infrastructure improvements downtown is especially important as the community works towards economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Construction is an essential service, and following Provincial direction, going forward with projects like this is a priority for the Town.

We know that this project will cause disruption and we thank you very much for your patience, cooperation and understanding. If we work together, we can help the process go more smoothly. Here is some information that we hope will be helpful for you, it outlines general details of the project; plans will be finalized on the award of the construction contract and more information will be available at www.okotoks.ca/dtutilityupgrade. If you have more questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

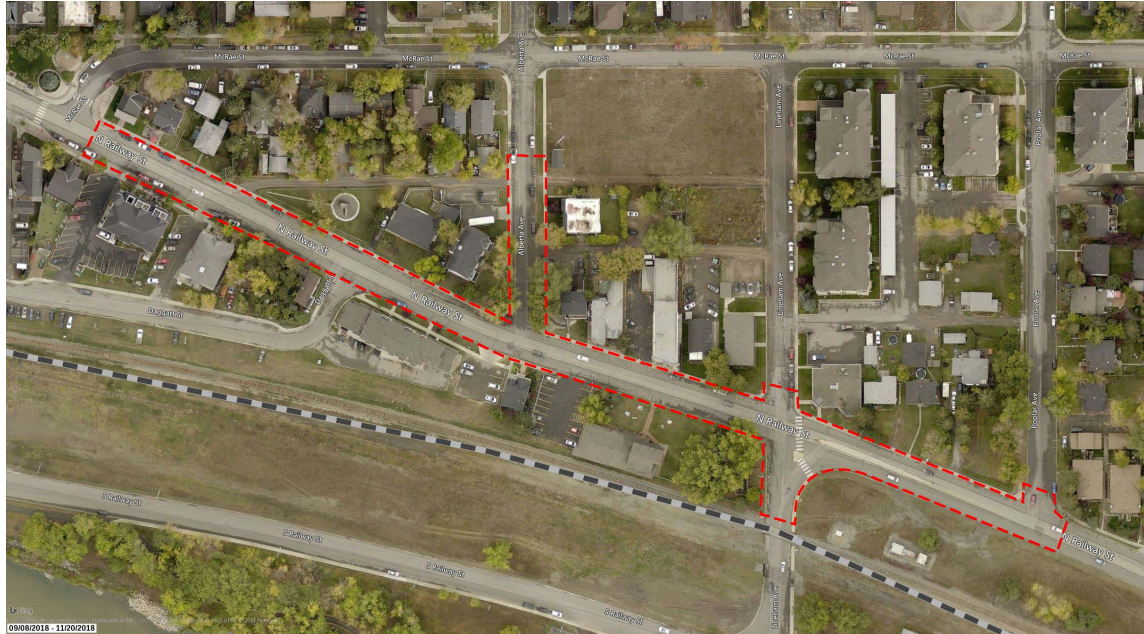
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Q: What is this project?

A: This project includes deep utility replacement (water and sewer) and road reconstruction on North Railway Street between McRae Street and Poplar Ave. It will include “curb-to-curb” road reconstruction to base lift asphalt.



Q: Why is this project required?

A: Infrastructure in this area was installed in the 1950s and lifecycle replacement is required. There have been a number of water main leaks and breaks in recent years leading to unplanned outages and water losses. Replacement of the deep utilities in the remainder of downtown occurred as part of previous vitalization phases as noted below and are complete.

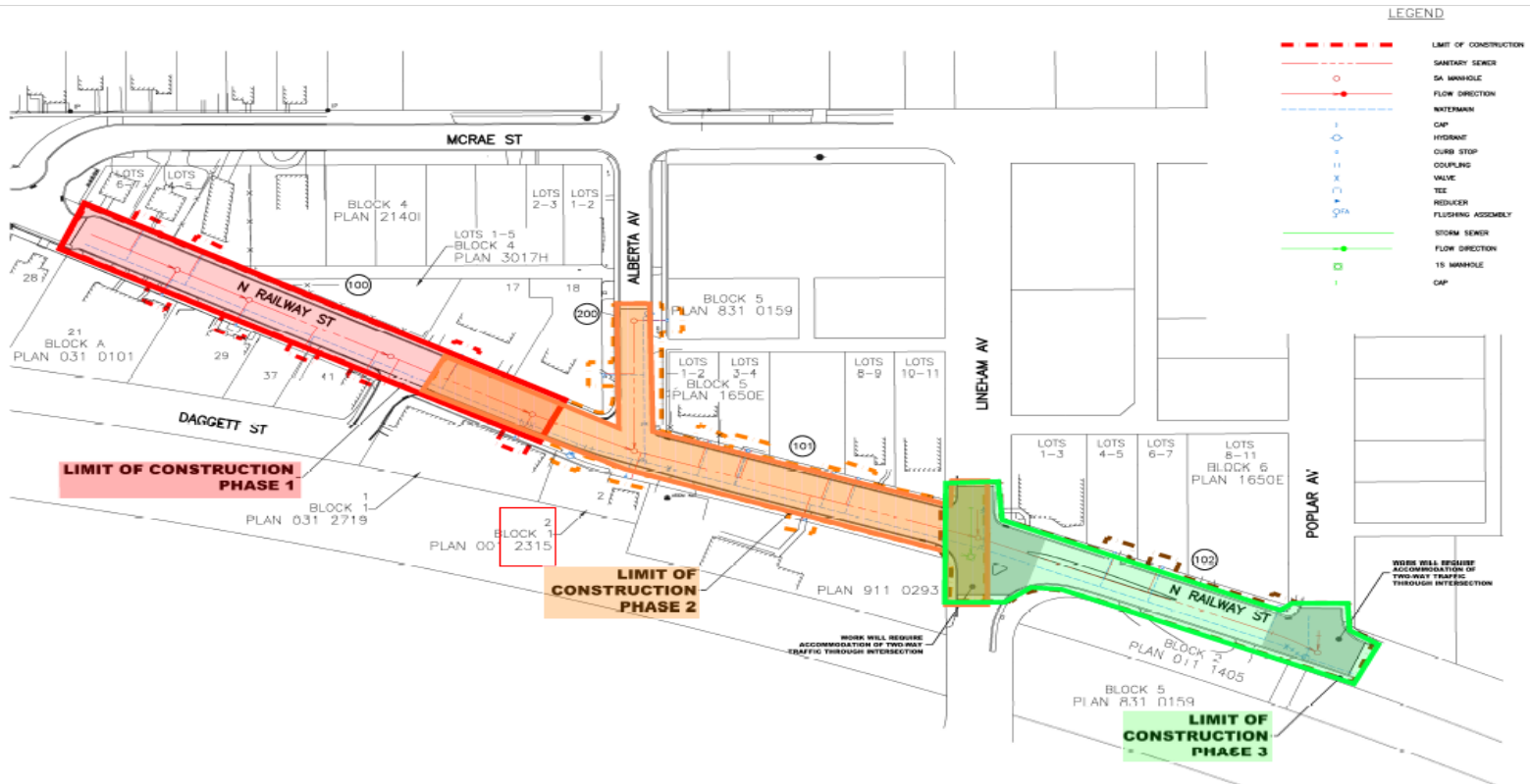
- Phase 1 (2001) – Elizabeth Street from Northridge Drive to Elk Street
- Phase 2 (2002) – Elizabeth Street from Elk Street to Veterans Way
- Phase 3 (2007) – McRae Street from Veterans Way to McRae Street



Q: What is the construction schedule and proposed timing?

A: This project is proposed to be completed in three phases to minimize the area impacted by construction while still ensuring that work can proceed efficiently to minimize its duration.

Construction of phases one and two is expected to start in early June and be completed within 4-6 weeks (weather permitting). Work would start on the west end to move construction away from the downtown core and the majority of businesses as quickly as possible. The Town has accelerated the project timelines significantly so the work can be done before all businesses have reopened. This has included adding bonus and penalty schedule clauses to the contract as an incentive for contractors to complete the work in an expedited manner. These clauses would reward the contractor if work is completed ahead of schedule and would result in penalties if the deadline is not met. To help meet these tight timelines, the contractor may be required to work seven days a week.



Q. What are some advantages of completing this work now?

A: The Town believes there are a number of advantages to accelerating the timeline for this work:

- The most important priority is to minimize the impact to businesses as much as possible. Even after COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, businesses may still not be able to operate at full capacity for some time. The current assessment is that doing the work while businesses are still closed, events cancelled and social distancing is in effect will have a lesser impact than waiting until 2022 to complete the work. The Town is seeking input from the businesses to determine if this assumption is accurate.
- A number of contractors have indicated that they have significant additional capacity to complete this project now in an expedited manner. Recent tendered project pricing has indicated favourable market pricing. As this project was advanced due to COVID-19, the Town is intending to include this project in a list for potential provincial COVID-19 stimulus funding.

Q. Can this project be deferred?

A: Yes, but deferral comes with the risk of unplanned deep utility failure. These emergency repairs will be at a higher cost and have a risk of additional disruption and impacts to businesses. The project will need to be ultimately completed in the near future. The consideration is whether it is less impactful to do the work now or postpone it until 2022. See chart below for an overview of the two options:

	Deep Utility Project in 2020	Deep Utility Project in 2022	General Considerations
Scope of Project	<p>The 2020 construction scope would be limited to deep utility replacement and road reconstruction.</p> <p>The 2022 construction scope would be limited to surface upgrades (sidewalk, landscaping, wayfinding).</p>	<p>The construction scope would include deep utility replacement, road reconstruction, and surface upgrades (sidewalk, landscaping, wayfinding).</p>	<p>Deep utility replacement is necessary in near future due to frequent failures, increased maintenance & repair costs, sewer capacity, fire flow requirements, reduce water leakage.</p> <p>Surface upgrades are “optional”.</p>
Impact to Businesses	<p>Some businesses are closed due to public health orders.</p> <p>Some businesses may be permitted to operate with limitations (e.g.: reduced capacity) in near future as per Phase 1 of the Province’s “Relaunch Strategy”.</p> <p>Consumer demand is reduced while public health orders are in effect. Construction timing coincides with critical “turning point” for many businesses.</p>	<p>Businesses are more likely to be recovered and stable, and may be better positioned to handle the impact of this project.</p> <p>Traffic will be heavier, community events may be impacted and, the impact will affect a larger number of businesses.</p>	<p>During deep utility/road replacement, the road will be closed to vehicles.</p> <p>During surface upgrades, the road will be open to vehicles, but parking will likely be prohibited to accommodate pedestrians.</p> <p>Pedestrian access will be accommodated and businesses will remain accessible at all times.</p> <p>Construction will be executed in phases.</p> <p>Perception that reduced parking availability will severely impact sales (i.e.: people are not willing to park and walk).</p>
Construction Costs & Contractor Capacity	<p>Based on recent tenders, construction costs are expected to be lower than normal.</p> <p>Due to recent project cancellations and deferrals, contractor availability and interest is high.</p> <p>This project has been submitted for</p>	<p>Government stimulus funding may become widely available which could reduce contractor availability and increase construction costs.</p> <p>Deferred timeline may not meet eligibility criteria for grant funding.</p>	<p>The Town has a fiduciary duty to all residents and businesses in Okotoks.</p>

	consideration by the Province for grant funding.		
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Q: What businesses are directly impacted?

A:

Healing Elements Acupuncture	Rumpled Quilt Skins
Homeground Coffee	Okotoks Dental
Florence Fashions	An Honest Room
Backbones Chiropractic and Sports Therapy	Agrifarm Health Centre Inc.
Raymond James - Financial Planner	Nikki's Best Esthetics
Langdon Strings	French 50 Bakery
Netwisper (Vivid Computers)	Young Therapy
Towne Hair	Marnie Stanton, Massage Therapist
Diesel Punk Vape	Centaur Massage
Bistro Provence	R. Brent Driscoll, Accountant
Brightpath Early Learning & Childcare	The Hair Studio
Robinson Bioproducts	

Q: How will affected businesses be informed during construction?

A: Information will be mailed/mailed to affected businesses/owners as necessary throughout the project. General project information updates will be available on the dedicated webpage (www.okotoks.ca/dtutilityupgrade) and on the Town's main and Economic Development social media feeds (Facebook/Twitter @townofokotoks & @EconomicOkotoks). Information will also be in the bi-weekly Town Pages in the Western Wheel newspaper as necessary.

Q: How will access be protected to my business?

A: Sidewalks will remain open and accessible to all users for the entire duration of construction. Steel construction fence will be installed along the edge of the road to provide physical separation between sidewalk users and the construction work in the roadway. Minor rerouting will be required to facilitate service connection replacements.

Q: How will construction impact vehicle traffic and parking?

A: For each phase of the project, road closures will be required. Detours and temporary traffic controls will be in place to minimize the impact to traffic. Daggett Street and McRae will generally remain open to local traffic.

Q: How will customers know if our business is open?

A: Signage identifying which business are open is proposed on each end of the project. The Town will work closely with area businesses, residents and other stakeholders to minimize impacts and address concerns about the project. The reality is that all construction is disruptive, but with collaboration, we can ensure impacts are mitigated.

Q: How will water and sanitary (sewer) service be affected by construction?

A: Prior to the start of each phase of construction, temporary water service will be connected to each property by the contractor. This typically requires a connection to an external hose bib or temporary piping in a mechanical room. Notice will be provided to all properties that will be affected by the water main replacement. Sanitary (sewer) service will remain unaffected by construction.

Q: How is this project being funded?

A: Funding for the deep utility replacement comes from utility reserves, which are earmarked specifically for projects of this nature. If stimulus funding is received for this project, the Town will apply stimulus funding instead of utility reserve funding.

Q What measures will you take to mitigate the noise and dust?

A: The contractor will be required to abide by the Town's noise bylaw and dust will be kept to an acceptable level through typical construction practices.