



## City Council News [April 18, 2018](#)

### Reid Street Revitalization

Despite extensive communications with the public and Reid Street businesses and multiple opportunities for the public to engage in the planning process, there is still some confusion about the Reid Street revitalization project. In fact, there was some commentary on Facebook this weekend about whether the project is a wise use of our tax dollars and why Reid Street will be redesigned to have wider sidewalks and a single lane for vehicle traffic.

This late stage consternation over a project that has been in the planning stages for over two years is a little frustrating, as ample opportunity was given to the public to participate in the redesign of Reid Street. Some of the people now trying to generate debate about this project just weeks before it starts did not take advantage of those opportunities when they were presented to them, some did participate in the process but don't like the outcome; the latter refusing to concede to the reality that in a democracy compromises need to be made in order to accommodate the wide range of interests that are always expressed when the public is given an opportunity to offer input on any matter.

The Reid Street project is, at its core, the replacement of a water main that was installed in the early 1950s. That water main is well past its serviceable life and is showing signs of failure at the connections to the pipes that provide water to the buildings along Reid. Rather than wait for a catastrophic failure of this old water main, it will be replaced this year in a proactive manner. The businesses along Reid Street have been given ample advance notice of this project and deliberate steps have been and will continue to be taken to minimize business interruption – something that would not be possible if we simply waited until the water main failed.

Because the water main is so deep and because each building along Reid will need a new connecting pipe, the entire street and all the sidewalks will be ripped up and replaced. This need to replace the street and sidewalks is what presented the opportunity to engage the public in a dialogue about redesigning Reid Street to more modern standards and expectations for a retail space.

Throughout the public consultation process some people expressed the view that there should be no change to Reid Street at all while some wanted the street, in whole or in part, converted to a pedestrian only space. However, in the first public consultation held on this project four main design criteria were arrived at through an electronic voting process, these design criteria were essentially affirmed with an online survey. Those who participated in these processes generally agreed they would like to see wider sidewalks, traffic slowed down, more opportunities for social space, and minimal loss of parking.

The final design for Reid Street adheres to the criteria obtained from the extensive public consultation that was held prior to issuing the tenders for this project. Council is aware that compromises were made and that change will be hard for some to accept, but the extensive consultation period for this project is over and crews will begin working on Reid Street in early May.

Look for a special City News in your mailbox next week with more details on what Reid Street will look like after the project is completed. This information and project updates will also be on the [City website](#) and at Spirit Centre, 246 St. Laurent Avenue.

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