





COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	March 29, 2023
SUBJECT:	Claremont Access (City Wide) (ENG23002)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Jackie Kennedy Director, Engineering Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Mike Field Director (Acting), Transportation Operations & Maintenance Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

Further to the Communication Update shared on March 1, 2023 ([ENG23001](#)) regarding the temporary closure of the Claremont Access downbound lanes, this is an update related to the City's ongoing efforts to address erosion and slope stability concerns along the Claremont Access.

As you're aware, the City has retained Stantec Consulting Limited (Stantec) to prepare plans to remove the steel walls from the escarpment along the Claremont Access this summer. Stantec conducts regular inspections as part of this work and on February 27, 2023, the consultant noticed a change in the steel wall, indicative of a potential failure of certain sections of the steel facing wall along the escarpment.

On March 2, 2023, out of an abundance of caution, and to ensure continued public safety along this escarpment roadway, the Transportation Operations and Maintenance Division closed both downbound lanes of the Claremont Access so that Engineering Services could increase monitoring and frequency of wall inspections.

While Engineering Services still plans to remove 600m of the steel wall facing in the summer of 2023, including the location of the potential failure, it has been exploring short-term approaches in the interim that would allow for the re-opening of the road sooner. Options considered included relieving pressure from the escarpment by removing some steel walls before the larger works began in the summer.

However, after a site visit on March 14, 2023, Stantec restated their recommendation to maintain the closure of both downbound lanes on the Claremont Access as there is no guarantee that a localized pressure relief, or the removal of two wall panels impacted, will provide safe conditions for road users. On this basis, Engineering Services is not pursuing a short-term approach to address only a portion of the walls and is focusing on expediting the longer term planned work scheduled to take place this summer.

In consultation with Procurement and pursuant to the emergency nature of the situation, Procurement Policy 5.3, subsection 6, will be utilised. A Request for Quotations (RFQ) has been issued for procuring services from contractors to undertake the planned works. The RFQ will be issued through bids and tenders and follow all procurement process protocols.

Following this approach, it is expected that work can be expedited, and the contractor can begin work to remove all the steel facing walls as early as May 2023. As part of the established escarpment stabilization program, removing these steel walls will allow the City and engineering consultants to better complete routine inspection practices to identify areas of potential concern and mitigate risks before failures occur. This work is expected to take approximately three months to complete, wrapping up this August or September. The downbound Claremont Access lanes are expected to open once work has completed. Further details regarding construction impacts and timing will be available in April 2023.

Once the steel facing walls are removed, the consultant will assess the condition of the rock escarpment face and determine remedial measures to reduce the erosion.

The Transportation, Operations and Maintenance division has reviewed the feasibility of changing the two upbound Claremont Access lanes to have one up and one down, however the width of the lanes does not allow for this to safely be implemented. Staff continues to look for opportunities to improve traffic flow while the downbound lanes are closed, including rescheduling non-urgent work on alternate escarpment access to reduce the amount of coinciding closures, and scheduling work to take place outside of rush hour (9 a.m. – 2 p.m.).

In 2020, the City completed resurfacing work on the upbound Claremont Access between Main Street and Inverness Avenue, including the construction of the Keddy Access Trail. Phase Two of the project, which includes the resurfacing of the downbound lanes of the Claremont Access is scheduled to be completed in 2025.

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The City understands this closure is challenging and results in longer commutes into the downtown core; however, public safety is our top priority and the temporary closure of the downbound lanes is a precautionary measure until the City can begin the steel wall removals in May.

The Claremont Access detour route remains in place. Vehicles using Upper James Street are being asked to follow Fennell Avenue East to Upper Wellington Street and use the Jolly Cut /Arkledun Avenue escarpment access. Detour signage has been posted as such and can be found on www.hamilton.ca/roadclosures.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A