

Frequently Asked Questions

Holland Creek Crossing

October 5, 2018

Q1: Why is the Town allowing a developer to build a crossing over the Holland Creek ravine and trail area?

- The Holland Creek Area Plan, first adopted in 2003 (and renewed in 2016 after extensive public consultation), includes a traffic crossing over Holland Creek from the end of Colonia Drive as part of the overall transportation network.
- The Plan area includes three development parcels zoned for residential and nature park use.
- The traffic assessment for this new neighbourhood of 1000 units concluded that this area should be ultimately served by three accesses – Dogwood Drive, Colonia Drive and Thetis Drive.
- The owner/developer of one of the three parcels of land in the Holland Creek area is working with the Town on plans for a road crossing that would span Holland Creek from the end of Colonia Drive to access his residential development lands on the other side.
- The crossing location at the end of Colonia Drive was established when this road was dedicated as part of a subdivision in 2008. The first phase of the owner/developer's project is for 38 single family residential lots.
- The owner of this parcel has had an easement over Holland Creek and trail to permit road access to be constructed since 2003. Because of the location of the land on the other side of the creek, the easement includes a crossing over the creek.
- As part of an earlier large lot subdivision in 2003, this same owner/developer provided 9.88 ha (24.4 acres) of land to the Town, allowing the Holland Creek trail network to become fully connected on the south side. The community has been enjoying this access for the past 15 years.
- If not for that land acquisition by the Town, today's users of the Holland Creek Trail would be unable to walk from one end of it to the other in an uninterrupted and continuous loop.

Q2: Can Council refuse to allow a crossing to be built over Holland Creek, or request a different type of crossing other than the type proposed by the developer?

- With the establishment of the Holland Creek corridor on the south side of the creek, an easement was granted to provide for a future crossing at this location (the end of Colonia Drive). There were also several other considerations provided to the land owner, such as Parks Development Cost Charge credits as part of the Town's acquisition of land for the trail on the south side of Holland Creek. All of the provisions were agreed to as part of the process that expanded the trail system – after many years, the owner is now exercising his right to complete the crossing.
- Further, the easement agreement does not dictate the type of crossing that the owner is entitled to build.
- The design and construction of the road on the crossing will meet all applicable requirements, including Town of Ladysmith road design standards. The crossing specifications and design will be drawn up by the developer's professional engineers, and must then be reviewed and approved by the Town's own engineering consultants. .

Q3: What is the crossing expected to look like?

- One of the key community objectives identified through many years of public engagement is that if there is to be a crossing over Holland Creek, it should have a minimal impact on the creek and blend into the surrounding forested area as much as possible.
- The developer's proposed crossing design would involve a structure that includes a two-lane road with a multi-use pathway on one side for pedestrians and cyclists, while providing continuous pedestrian trail access where the crossing is located via two pedestrian tunnels under the roadway. These tunnels would connect with the existing trail system.
- At Council's request, the design will include access to the trail on both sides of the creek to facilitate at-grade crossing by way of the road system for those pedestrians who don't wish to use the tunnels.
- Further, the pedestrian tunnel closest to Colonia Drive will be paved in order to make it accessible for mobility aids such as wheelchairs.
- The entire structure would be seeded and planted with a variety of native plantings and vegetation, eventually allowing it to blend into the natural environment when viewed from the walking trail. A landscape bond will be provided to ensure replanting, if needed, during the period while the vegetation is becoming established.

Q4: Does Council have a say on the type of crossing that will be built?

- The proposed crossing fits within the policy parameters of the Holland Creek Local Area Plan, adopted in 2016. The Local Area Plan stipulates the following principle for crossings:

Bridge and creek crossings over Holland Creek and Heart Creek shall be designed to respect and harmonize with the natural setting, minimize stream impact, maintain the integrity of the trail system and provide pedestrian access.

- Council has requested that the developer ensure that one of the walkways is accessible for those with mobility aids. In addition, Council has ensured that the crossing will include an at-grade pedestrian crossing for those who do not wish to use the tunnels.
- Council follows the Town's engineering standards and specifications for new infrastructure which form part of the Town's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw. This covers all infrastructure types such as water, sewer, and roads. Council also had a role in approving the development permit for the project which includes requirements for working in the Holland Creek riparian area.
- Subdivision approval is not a role of Council.

Q5: When will construction on the new crossing start?

- The project was given authorization from the BC Ministry of Environment for instream works, and had to comply with any timing windows for this area (e.g. fisheries). The timing windows have now passed for 2018.
- Further, while the riparian development permit for the project has been approved by the Town, the owner/developer has not yet submitted the detailed engineered drawings for the crossing. No works or site clearing can commence until all plans have been reviewed and approved by the Town's professional engineers, and construction approval has been granted.

Q6: Does the Town have the authority to decide on process and timing of the construction of the Holland Creek crossing?

- The developer must submit engineering drawings to the Town before the next phase in the process can commence. However, as noted, the provincial fisheries window for 2018 has passed, which means that no work to construct the crossing will take place this year.

Q7: What is the Town doing to ensure the least amount of environmental impact and disruption to users of the Holland Creek Trail system?

- It is our commitment to ensure that the crossing has minimal short and long term impacts on the community and trail users.

- Holland Creek and the trail area fall within the Town's Riparian Development Permit Area 6. This means that the Town has to issue a development permit to enable land alteration and construction to commence. Other conditions also apply regarding engineered design of the road system and crossing. The Riparian Development permit was approved by Council on August 20, 2018.
- We've also brought this matter before the Town's Parks, Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee and our Advisory Design Panel for input.
- Council considered this input and approved the crossing of Holland Creek with two pedestrian tunnels, subject to the following direction, at its June 18, 2018 meeting:
 - A landscape plan for the crossing structure and area, including native plantings and associated landscape bond;
 - Access to the trail at each end of the crossing to facilitate at-grade crossing; and
 - Aesthetic design of the entrance to the pedestrian tunnels in consultation with Town staff.
- The landscape plan was provided as part of the Riparian Development Permit application and approved by Council on August 20, 2018.
- The Riparian Development Permit includes requirements for ongoing environmental monitoring throughout the project from start-up to completion, including time to allow for the plantings to be established. Council has required a \$50,000 landscape bond as a condition of issuing this permit.
- The detailed engineering drawings will show the access to the trail at each end of the crossing to facilitate at-grade crossing. This is part of the subdivision approval process, along with the aesthetic design of the entrance to the pedestrian tunnels.

Q8: Will there be any pedestrian improvements to Colonia Drive or Malone Road as traffic increases in this area?

- The Town is proposing to complete the sidewalk along the east side of Colonia Drive, as well as along the south side of Malone Road.
- This project is part of the Town's proposed Development Cost Charges (DCC) program which is funded in part through contributions by developers when they are subdividing land or constructing multiple-family residential, commercial, industrial or institutional projects.
- DCC funding is an important source of revenue to fund these proposed improvements.