

Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive

active transportation engagement summary

Nov. 10, 2025

Overview

In October and November of 2025, Halifax Regional Municipality (the municipality) employees led an online public engagement project on Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive, Dartmouth to gauge interest in constructing a new sidewalk in conjunction with planned road recapitalization work. Letters were distributed to residents on and near the streets and an Engage Halifax webpage with an online survey was promoted.

The result from this work indicates about 80% community residents support the construction of a new sidewalk. Common themes in the feedback include safer space for walking, reducing speeding, and impact on property and vegetation. As result, this report recommends pursuing this project to the next step of detailed design and tendering.

Background

Many streets in Halifax were built without sidewalks. The municipality's New Sidewalk Program aims to add sidewalks to streets that identified as "high need" based on criteria such as proximity to schools, transit, shops and the classification of the street. Each year, the municipality adds about three kilometres of new sidewalks across the region, usually in conjunction with projects to rehabilitate typically as part of asphalt and curb rehabilitation projects.

Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive are local streets in Dartmouth. Since Birchwood Terrace between Lorraine Street and Lawnsdale Drive and Lawnsdale Drive between Birchwood Terrace and Louise Avenue were included in the high need sidewalk list, a new sidewalk installment was considered as part of the recapitalization work. These streets were added into the high need sidewalk list as a result of their proximity to the Crichton Park Elementary School and the network connections they would provide by connecting to existing sidewalk on Frederick Street and Lawnsdale Drive.

While Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive rate high need for new sidewalk, there are some constructability issues with sidewalk installment. This includes requiring the removal of mature trees, shortening of driveways and narrowing the road for about two metres to 7.5 metres curb-to-curb (Figure 2). With these constraints, Active Transportation (AT) employees were unsure over whether a new sidewalk should be constructed as part of recapitalization or not. To gain a better understanding of how to proceed for this project, the AT team decided to undergo an online public engagement with residents in the community.

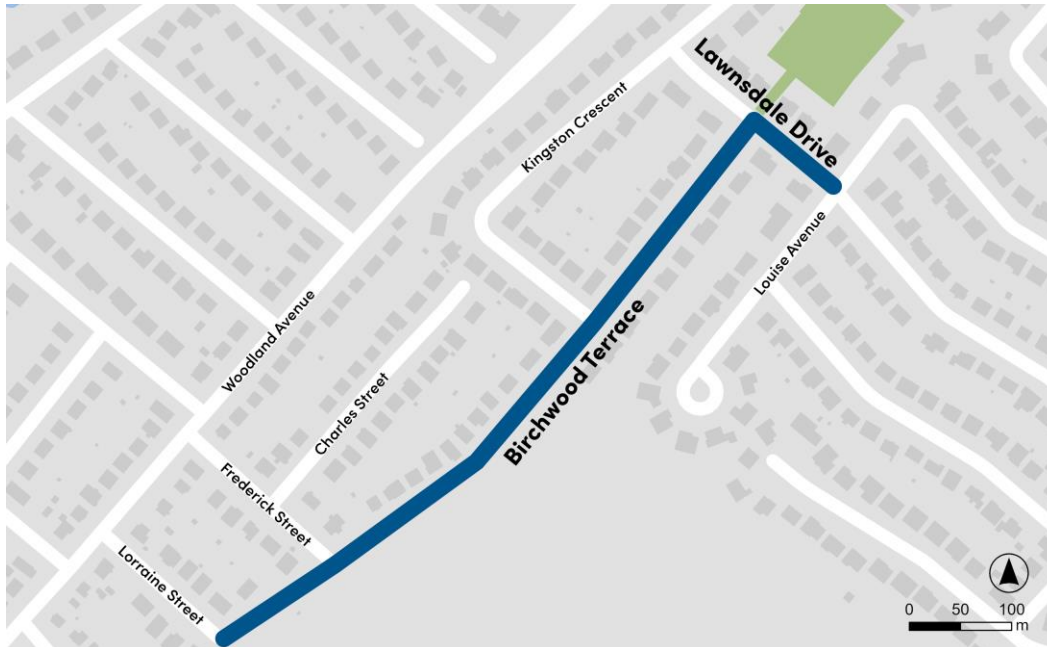


Figure 1. Subject location updated on Nov. 6, 2025

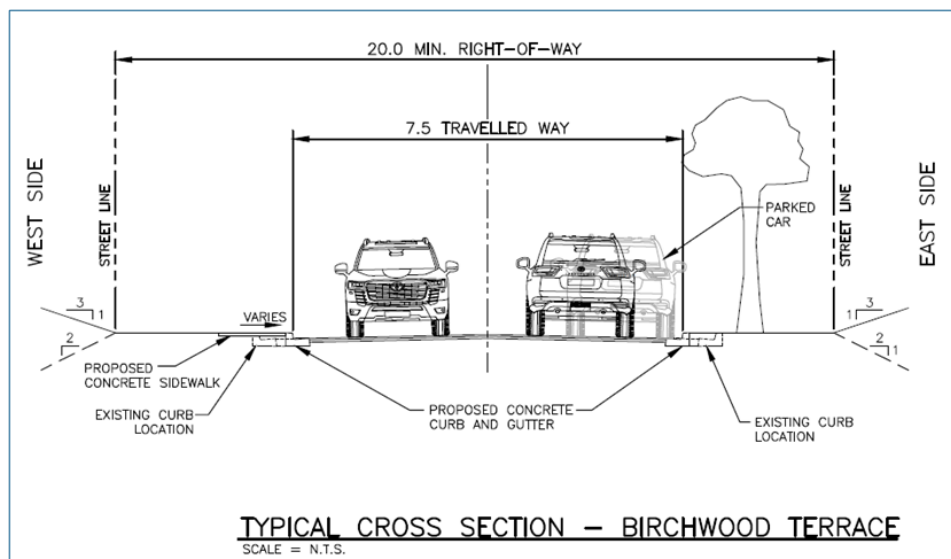


Figure 2. Cross section of Birchwood Terrace with new sidewalk.

Process

As part of this public engagement process, letters were sent out to residents, and an Engage Halifax webpage was developed with an online survey. The engagement was also promoted on the social media posts without investment on advertisement.

Letters

The letters were distributed to residents living alongside and close to Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive. Figure 3 shows the area that received the letter. In total, 158 letters were

distributed to residents at the shown locations (Figure 3). These letters directed recipients to the Engage Halifax webpage, online survey, and provided information relating to the project. These letters were distributed on Oct. 19, 2025.

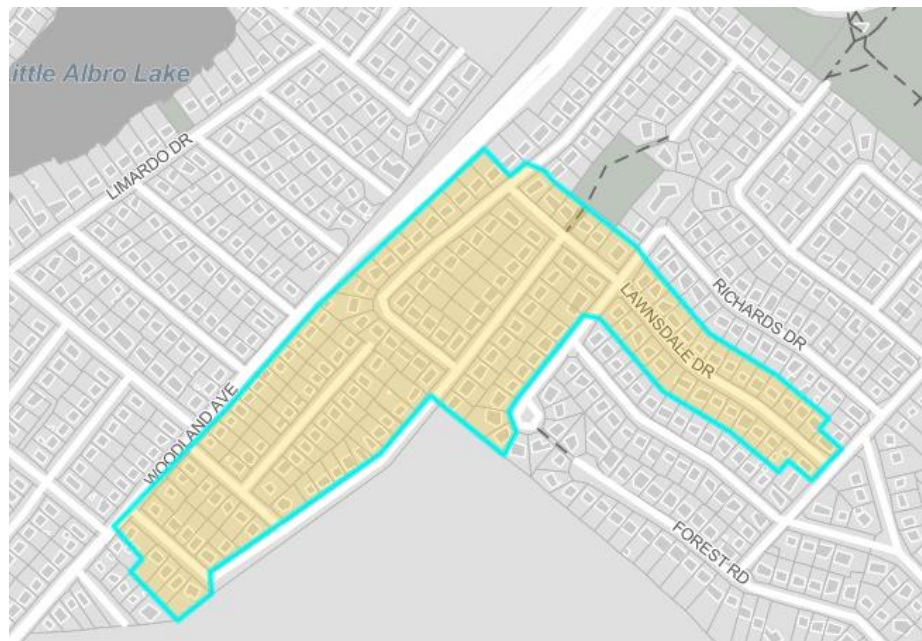


Figure 3. Areas where letters were distributed.

Engage Halifax and survey

The Engage Halifax page contained the same information as the letter that was distributed to neighbourhood residents. Promotion was done through letters, the Halifax Regional Municipality District Councillor Sam Austin, and posting links on social media platforms. The Engage Halifax page included a survey with five questions that was open for two weeks, from Oct. 20 to Nov. 3, 2025.

It is important to note that there was an error found on the segment shown on the online page after the survey was closed. The original page showed that Lawnsdale Drive will have a sidewalk between Kingston Crescent and Louise Avenue, which supposed to be between Birchwood Terrace and Louise Avenue. Although this error was found, there is no plan for additional public engagement since the result was overall positive for this engagement. The findings below show the results of asking about following segments:

- Birchwood Terrace between Lorraine Street and Lawnsdale Drive
- Lawnsdale Drive between Kingston Crescent and Louise Avenue

Findings

Online survey

There were 198 responses to this survey. The first question asked for the Forward Sortation Area (FSA), which is three digits of the respondent's postal code. The distribution of these

responses showed that 94% of the respondents live in area with B3A. There were 6% of respondents lived on other FSAs, which had one respondent each. Additionally, the survey asked the street names that respondents live on or near the subject location (i.e., Birchwood Terrace, Lawnsdale Drive, and Kingston Crecent).

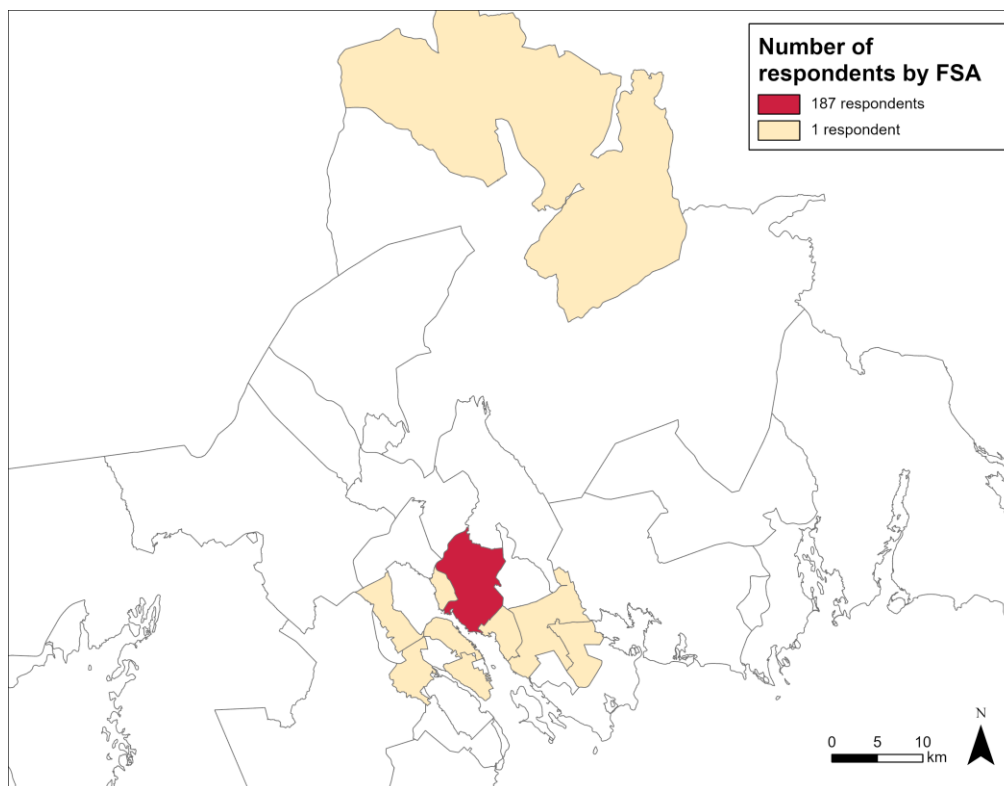


Figure 4. Number of respondents by FSA

The third question asked respondents their level of support for a sidewalk and the fourth question asked about the respondent's rationale for their level of support. For Birchwood Terrace between Lorraine Street and Lawnsdale Drive, 81% of respondents were supportive of a new sidewalk. Within this group, 100% answered that they support sidewalk installment as it will provide safety people who walk/roll on the street (Figure 5). In addition to this, 60% answered that greater accessibility for people with disabilities is another reason of supporting a new sidewalk (Figure 5). 19% of respondents were opposed to the sidewalk installment on Birchwood Terrace. Within this group, 81% raised concerns of narrower street, 62% felt this is not necessary, and 51% were concerned about the cost (Figure 6).

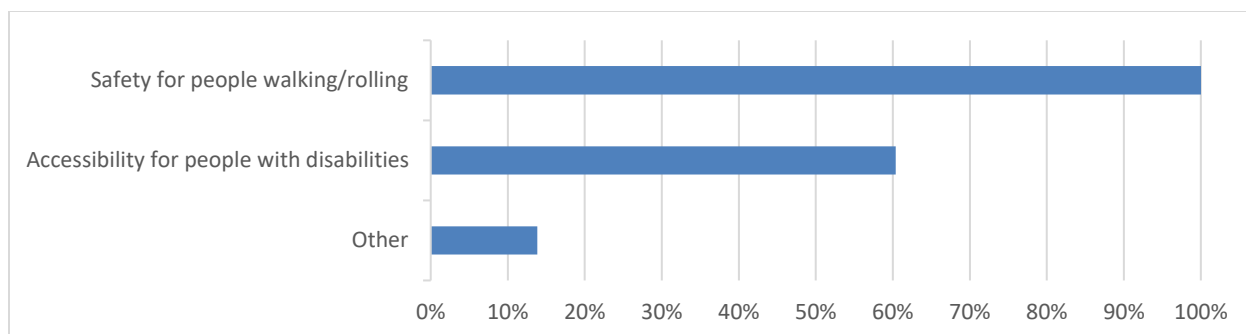


Figure 5. Reasons for supporting sidewalk installment on Birchwood Terrace between Lorraine Street and Lawnsdale Drive (multiple choice)

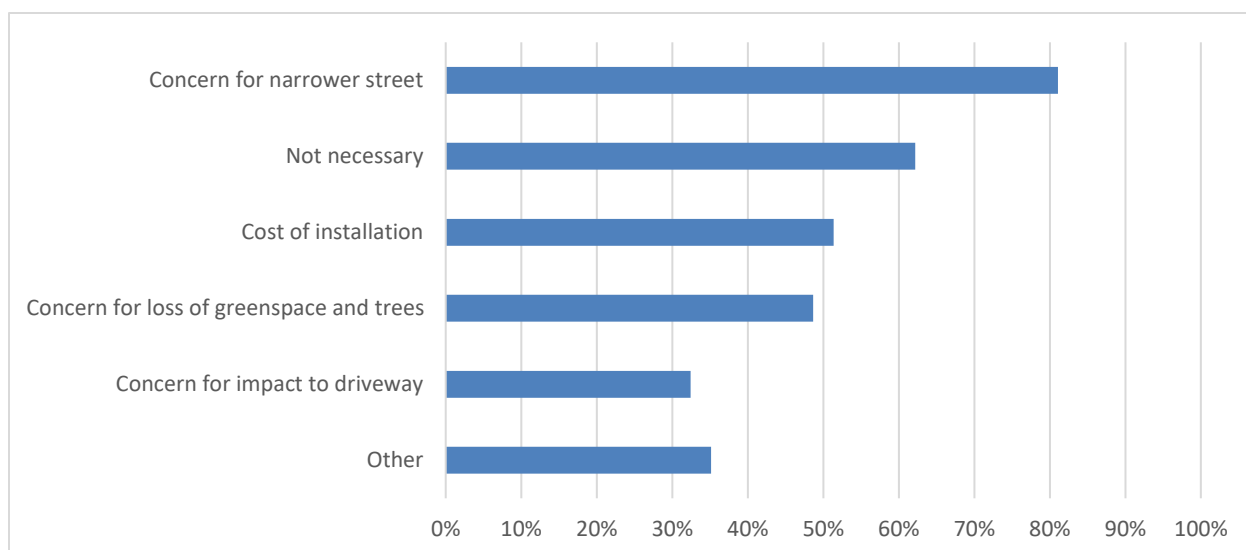


Figure 6. Reasons for opposing sidewalk instalment on Birchwood Terrace between Lorraine Street and Lawnsdale Drive (multiple choice)

When asked about levels of support for new sidewalk on Lawnsdale Drive between Kingston Crescent and Louise Avenue, 79% of the respondents were supportive. Within this group, 99% answered that they support this sidewalk installment as it will provide safety people who walk/roll on the street (Figure 7). In addition to this, 58% answered that accessibilities for people with disabilities is another reason of supporting it (Figure 7). 21% of respondents were opposed to the sidewalk installment on Birchwood Terrace. Within this group, 82% felt this is not necessary, 51% were concerned about the cost, and 46% raised concerns of narrower street (Figure 8).

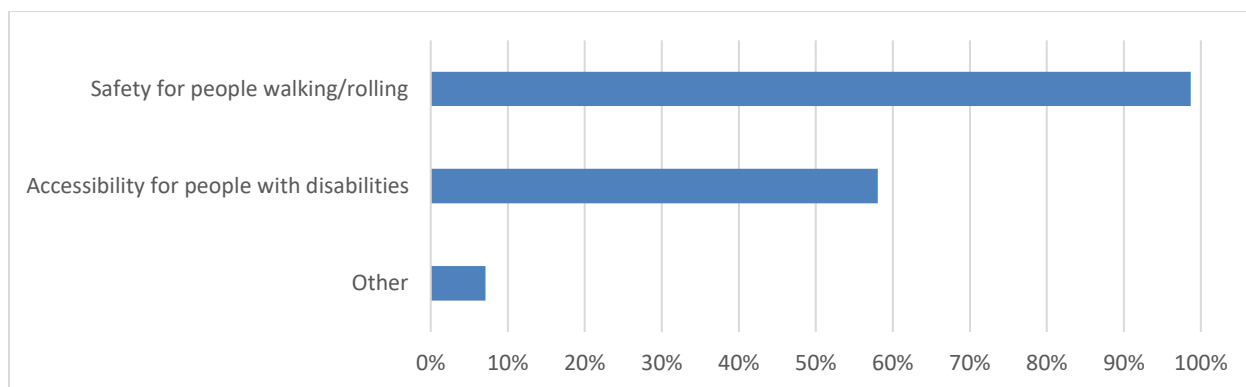


Figure 7. Reasons for supporting sidewalk installment on Lawnsdale Drive between Kingston Crescent and Louise Avenue (multiple choice)

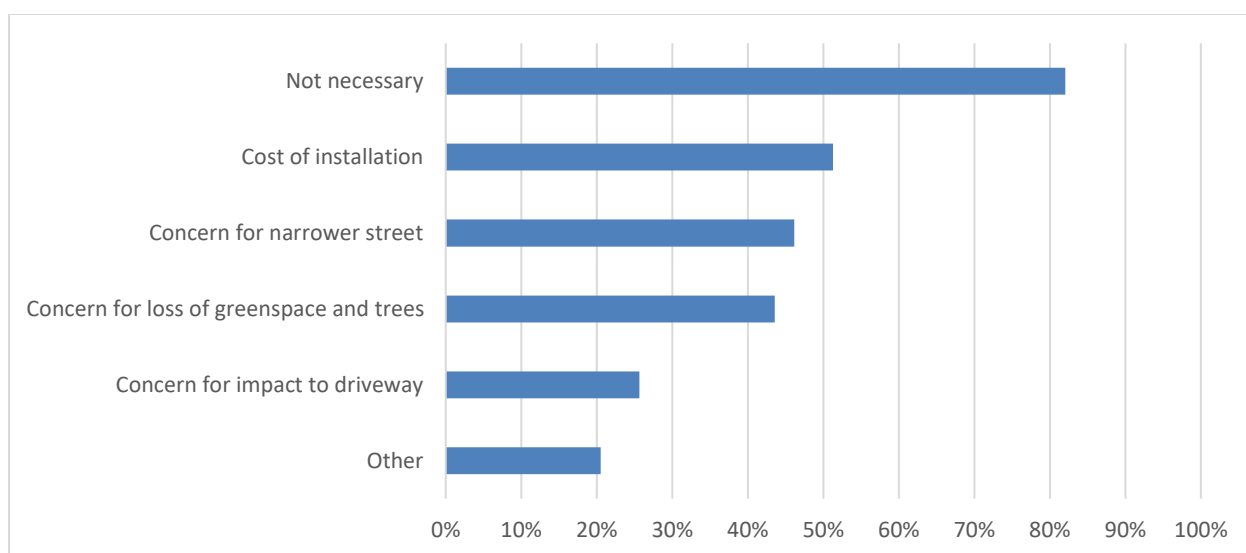


Figure 8. Reasons for opposing sidewalk installment on Lawnsdale Drive between Kingston Crescent and Louise Avenue (multiple choice)

The final question asked if there was any other feedback that they would like to provide. 60% of the comments were supportive of the project, 16% were against and others were either neutral, mixed feelings or questions. Those who support the project mentioned safety for children and need for reduced speeding. Those who were not supporting the project mentioned concerns around impacts on traffic and existing vegetation. There were many of suggestions for installing traffic calming measures such as speed cushions and stop signs at the Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive intersection which came from both positive and negative comments.

Below are some responses to the final question:

In support of new sidewalk

“This project is long overdue. More apartment buildings are being constructed in the area, and while they are not all right in the Chrichton Park area, Birchwood Terrace will inevitably see more traffic volume from Woodland Ave to reach Banook and downtown”

“Narrowing this roadway and providing dedicated sidewalk will help increase safety on a heavily trafficked section of the neighborhood. Speeds can get high particularly on the long stretch of Birchwood”

Against new sidewalk

“Backing out into the narrow street with cars parked on it would be harder to do Main street into area Cars parked on it and a bad winter could make it hard for emergency vehicles to get into area Lived here 38 yrs and dont know of anyone being hit by a car”

“This will lead to more on street parking and driver frustration driving. People from other streets use Birchwood Terrace for ambulance and fire response”

Road safety measure suggestions

“The sidewalks will be a positive thing for safety. Areas of our neighbourhood are hazardous for pedestrians. There should be a four way stop on the corner of Louise and Lawnsdale as well as some other obstacles to slow the speed of traffic on Lawnsdale.”

“I believe the impact to peoples driveways and loss of green space and trees outweighs the need for sidewalks. However, I think at the very least speed bumps should be installed on Birchwood to address the high speeds people drive at.”

Email responses

In addition to the survey responses, there were 11 emails received by AT staff. Four of them were positive, six of them were against the sidewalk installation and one was neutral with questions. These could be categorized to the following themes:

- Need of safer space for walking
- Concerned on impact on property and questions regarding the impact
- Concerned on impact on vegetation
- Concerned on impact on driveway and parking space
- Concerned on impact on traffic
- Suggestion of adding speed cushion instead of sidewalks

Analysis and recommendations

The majority of respondents to the online survey (roughly 80%) were supportive of sidewalk installment on Birchwood Terrace between Lorraine Street and Lawnsdale Drive, and Lawnsdale Drive between Birchwood Terrace and Louise Avenue, while the majority of email responses (roughly 54%) raised concerns of this project. Combining the two totals together, the majority of responses received for this engagement project were supportive of new sidewalk (77%).

The supporting comments expressed concerns on existing road safety issues with fast moving traffic, especially on Birchwood Terrace while having pedestrians, including children walking by. On the other hand, concerns raised from those who were against the project were mainly about impacts on property and vegetation which will need to be clarified and explained to the property owners on both streets in the next step of this project.

Given a large majority of survey respondents support sidewalk installments at both streets, this report recommends pursuing the installment of sidewalk at Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive. However, if the project needs be cancelled by any challenges in the future, during the process of designing and installment of the sidewalks, it is recommended to explore the opportunities of adding traffic calming measures on Birchwood Terrace, such as speed cushions based on the suggestions from residents.