

DATE OF MEETING DECEMBER 17, 2018

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SUBJECT **WATERFRONT WALKWAY – PROJECT SUMMARY**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with an update on the Waterfront Walkway Project.

### **Recommendation**

That the report titled “Waterfront Walkway – Project Summary”, dated 2018-DEC-17, be received for information.

## **DISCUSSION**

The waterfront walkway is one of the City’s key recreational assets for both local residents and visitors. In the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan, City Council identified a vision for a ‘continuous, uninterrupted and accessible trail from Departure Bay to the Nanaimo River Estuary’; a total distance of 13km. In the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan Update, Council identified the waterfront walkway as one of the City’s key Capital Projects. The expansion of the existing waterfront walkway is also supported by several neighbourhood plans and other City policies, including the Transportation Master Plan and Official Community Plan.

To date, 4.5km of the planned 13km walkway has been built to varying standards and widths, and has been focused along the downtown core, the Newcastle Channel, the Departure Bay seawall, and behind the BC Ferries Departure Bay Terminal. There are currently a number of missing gaps that limit the connectivity and use of the walkway between the Departure Bay seawall and downtown, and there are no waterfront connections south of the downtown.

At the 2017-DEC-18 Council meeting, Council endorsed the [Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan](#). The plan set out an orderly approach to completing a continuous 13km pathway over a ten-year period, and included order-of-magnitude construction cost estimates valued at over \$36M. The plan was completed with significant input from the community and revealed a strong public support for the development of the waterfront walkway. The community engagement process also revealed that development of the walkway between the Departure Bay Seawall and the BC Ferries Terminal was the top priority section.

### **2018/2019 Funding Commitment**

The Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan recommended the initial focus be on a number of priority projects that can be designed and constructed in the near future. In addition, a previous commitment to work with the Nanaimo Yacht Club to widen the walkway in their lease area was included.

Staff have also been working with BC Ferries exploring options for a walkway as part of the redevelopment of the Gabriola Ferry Terminal. The remaining sections of the waterfront walkway have been included in the Capital Plan over the next ten years.

A breakdown of the funding commitment for the priority sections of the walkway are illustrated below.

Priority Projects	Budget	Funding Source	Amount Spent to Date
1 Port Drive	\$1,000,000	Gas Tax Grant	\$0
NPA Boat Basin	\$200,000 \$1,350,000 \$650,000	2018 Community Works Gas Tax Grant 2019 Community Works	\$0
Newcastle Channel Asia Pacific	\$50,000 \$500,000	2018 Community Works 2019 Community Works	\$0
Newcastle Channel Nanaimo Shipyard	\$50,000 \$500,000	2018 Community Works 2019 Community Works	\$0
Newcastle Channel Nanaimo Yacht Club	\$125,000 \$671,000 \$579,000	PILTs PILTs Nanaimo Yacht Club	\$0
Northfield Creek	\$131,657 \$1,350,000 \$2,050,000	PILTs Gas Tax Grant 2018 Community Works	\$295,879
Gabriola Ferry Terminal	\$0	\$Not identified	\$0

## Project Update – Priority Projects

### *1 Port Drive*

This section of the walkway has been designed to an interim standard and accommodates both pedestrians and cyclists. The walkway will stretch from the City-owned lands at 1 Port Drive to the new entrance for the Nanaimo Port Authority (NPA) Assembly Wharf property. The section is estimated to cost \$1M. A grant from the Federal Gas Tax Fund has been received for this project. Staff anticipate the project will be tendered with the Front Street Extension project in early 2019.

### *NPA Boat Basin*

The waterfront walkway has been completed around the NPA Boat Basin, with one missing piece between the Port Theatre and Cameron Island. The NPA is currently developing a plan to redevelop the Boat Basin. The NPA's Boat Basin upgrades present an opportunity to leverage the NPA's investment with a private contribution from a neighbouring rezoning and use City funds to complete the section. Staff understand that the redevelopment project is likely to be phased over a number of years and the walkway upgrade would occur near the end of the project. Design work has not commenced on this section.

### *Newcastle Channel*

There are a few incomplete sections of the walkway along the Newcastle Channel that need to be completed in order to provide a continuous walkway from downtown to the BC Ferries

Departure Bay Ferry Terminal. The City has committed through a Letter of Intent to partner with the Nanaimo Yacht Club to widen the walkway by the end of 2019. Design work is scheduled to start in early 2019 on the Nanaimo Shipyard detour. No work has commenced on the Asia Pacific Yacht Club as further discussions with the NPA are required.

#### *Departure Bay – Northfield Creek Section*

Completing the waterfront walkway from BC Ferries Departure Bay Ferry Terminal to Departure Bay Beach was identified as a priority during the public consultation process. The Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan included a recommendation that the project be broken up into two sections. The first section calls for the trail to be built from BC Ferries Departure Bay Ferry Terminal past Northfield Creek to the existing trail at White Eagle Terrace. The subsequent section would run from White Eagle Terrace to Battersea Road.

As part of the public consultation, both an elevated walkway and a trail at the toe of the slope were presented. There was considerable preference for the elevated walkway with approximately 60% of respondents choosing that option.

The Northfield Creek section of the walkway was set up to include the following design elements:

- 350m of elevated walkway;
- steel pile foundations to minimize disturbance to the marine environment, shoreline vegetation, and steep slopes;
- a width of 7.2m wide to allow safe use by pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities;
- appropriate safety features such as LED lighting and cycling height railings;
- amenities such as benches and waste receptacles; and
- connections to Beach Estates Park and White Eagle Terrace.

A grant of \$1,350,000 was received from the Gas Tax Fund to cover a portion of the construction costs. The grant requires the project to be ready for construction in March 2019.

Functional Design, costing, and permit applications were completed for the project in 2018; however, there were outstanding concerns around cost and constructability given the location.

To better understand the costs, risks, and feasibility of the project, Staff undertook a value engineering exercise. A team of value engineering consultants was hired in the fall of 2018 to review the project design, confirm costs and identify alternative design options. The key findings include:

- Constructability – the project as envisioned is very difficult to build due to the sensitive nature of the foreshore and the lack of access points.
- Risk of Further Price Escalation – a key component of the project is the use of steel piles. The cost of steel has risen sharply due to tariffs introduced by Canada and the United States. It is difficult to predict the cost of steel in six months and this poses a significant financial risk.
- Alternatives, such as constructing the walkway at the toe of the existing slope or through a green shores approach, appear to be in line with the current budget for the project and are less risky to construct than the elevated option.

- Reconsidering this section as a beach habitat enhancement project with a walkway component may be a way of reframing this section of the project.

#### *Gabriola Ferry Terminal*

BC Ferries is currently preparing a redevelopment plan for the Gabriola Ferry Terminal in Nanaimo Harbour. Staff have been working with BC Ferries to explore options for the extension of the waterfront walkway across the terminal to connect with the existing walkway at Cameron Island and the proposed walkway at 1 Port Drive. Redevelopment of the terminal is scheduled for 2020 and Staff will return with more information for Council if a walkway option is deemed feasible by BC Ferries.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will return to Council in early 2019 with a Staff report outlining options for Council's consideration on the Departure Bay walkway section of the project.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The expansion of the waterfront walkway is one of the five projects identified by Council in the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan.
- The Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan was endorsed by Council in December 2017.
- The implementation plan identified a number of priority projects that could be implemented in the near term.
- Design work is complete for the South Downtown Waterfront section of the walkway.
- Design work has not commenced on the NPA Boat Basin section.
- Design work is scheduled for the Nanaimo Yacht Club section in 2019.
- Functional design work has been completed for the Northfield Creek Section. The cost estimates for this section are above the project budget. A value engineering exercise has identified other options that the City may wish to explore in this area.
- Staff have been working with BC Ferries on the opportunity to extend the walkway from Cameron Island to 1 Port Drive through the proposed redevelopment of the ferry terminal in 2020.
- Staff will return with a report outlining options for Council's consideration for the waterfront walkway project in early 2019.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Report URLs |

#### **Submitted by:**

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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