

DATE OF MEETING NOVEMBER 4, 2019

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SUBJECT DOWNTOWN MOBILITY HUB PROJECT UPDATE FROM PHASE 1

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with a status update on the Downtown Mobility Hub Project, and to seek Council direction on specific aspects of the project.

Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council approve siting an on-street Transit Exchange on Front Street adjacent 1 Port Drive, and direct Staff to proceed to Phase 2 of the project to:

- work with the Regional District of Nanaimo to prepare a design for an on-street Transit Exchange,
- complete designs for the Downtown and Albert Street bikeways,
- complete a review of the Downtown Road Network to seek opportunities to enhance connectivity,
- finalize the Parking Management Strategy, and
- develop plans to optimize streetscapes and place making.

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2019, Staff engaged a consulting team to undertake the Downtown Mobility Hub Project (DMHP), a review of mobility projects identified in the 2019-2023 Capital Plan. The goal of this project was to review existing plans, identify new opportunities, and to deliver a strategic plan to implement multiple walking, biking, and transit projects focused on enhancing mobility and livability Downtown.

The DMHP is an example of Staff embracing Council's Strategic Priorities for Governance Excellence, Environmental Responsibility, and Livability. Staff have worked to enhance stakeholder engagement by working with residents and other agencies, such as the Regional District of Nanaimo and the Chamber of Commerce. This project is also taking steps to ensure that Downtown will be the cornerstone of a Live, Work, Play neighbourhood with a strong active, sustainable, and accessible transportation system.

DISCUSSION

Between April and June 2019, the team undertook a review of all existing planning documents and conducted a thorough preliminary engagement study; see Attachment A – Phase 1 Community Input Summary.

Using the feedback from this engagement, the team generated recommendations for the Downtown Bicycle Network and Facilities, and an evaluation on siting the Downtown Nanaimo Mobility Hub: Transit Exchange; see Attachment B – Technical Memo dated September 4, 2019 and C – Technical Memo dated July 19, 2019.

This phase of the project also included a baseline assessment of parking supply and demand Downtown; see Attachment D – Technical Memo dated July 11, 2019. This information provides insight into the existing conditions, and will provide guidance on the probable impacts of changes resulting from the introduction of cycling facilities and road network changes. Before the Parking Management Strategy can be finalized, it is necessary to advance the walking, cycling, transit, and road upgrade designs. Once these designs have become more developed, a further comparison of supply, demand, and turn over will then be undertaken to provide a more complete picture. Subsequently a stronger understanding of the opportunities to manage parking Downtown will emerge. Ultimately, this will support decisions on short, medium, and long duration parking limits, pricing, and enforcement.

Staff and the consulting team are now ready to move forward with the next phase of engagement. With this, the team will present the preliminary mobility plans to stakeholders and the community. Feedback from this engagement will be used to move into the functional designs stage and ultimately the preparation of an implementation and construction strategy. The engagement phase will also be an opportunity for the community to guide decisions on features that will enhance the place-making nature of the projects. It is anticipated these designs will create opportunities for features such as public art, landscaping, and meeting spaces, which will all contribute to a more vibrant and livable Downtown. Following Phase 2, Staff will be returning to Council with a final report outlining the functional plans and implementation strategy for Downtown Mobility upgrades.

OPTIONS

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council approve siting an on-street Transit Exchange on Front Street adjacent 1 Port Drive, and direct Staff to proceed to Phase 2 of the project to:
 - work with the Regional District of Nanaimo to prepare a design for an on-street Transit Exchange,
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 - develop plans to optimize streetscapes and place making.

2. That the GPC provide Staff with direction for an alternative next Phase. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Downtown Mobility Hub Project directly supports Council's Strategic Priorities for Excellence and Environmental Responsibility.
- The project is evolving mobility design principles, to enhance a sense of place which has been shown to create more vibrant and livable communities.
- Funding for the work within the Downtown Mobility Hub Project is in the current financial plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Phase 1 Community Input Summary
Attachment B – Technical Memo dated September 4, 2019
Attachment C – Technical Memo dated July 19, 2019
Attachment D – Technical memo dated July 11, 2019|

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