

DATE OF MEETING MAY 04, 2020

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SUBJECT ALLOCATION OF UNALLOCATED PEDESTRIAN FUNDS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with an update on the plans for the 2020 Pedestrian Unallocated Budget, along with options for its use.

Recommendation

That Council approve the recommendation that the \$300,000 Pedestrian Unallocated Funds be allocated to the projects listed under “Intersection Upgrades”.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2018, an annual unallocated budget of \$300,000 was added to the Financial Plan for pedestrian enhancements. These funds were envisioned to be used to address pedestrian mobility issues that arise during the year and are deemed to be more urgent than what could be dealt with through the project and financial planning process. Since its creation, this budget has been used to address gaps in the sidewalk network and added pedestrian crossing enhancements at various locations.

DISCUSSION

Through to the end of 2019, Staff have received several requests for sidewalks and pedestrian intersection crossing enhancements throughout the City. After collecting data and conducting site observations, Staff have determined that there are several locations that could benefit from changes. There are many more that are either cost prohibitive or impractical to pursue. Of those that Staff have assessed, there are 11 locations for sidewalks and 13 intersection enhancements that Staff are tracking. Of these locations, some have already been incorporated into larger projects and will be addressed within the current Financial Plan. However, there are still some that Staff feel are worthy of further consideration for enhancements.

Sidewalks

1. Departure Bay Road – Alan-A-Dale Place to Wardropper Park
Class D Estimate: \$300,000

This is a location that was identified through the Departure Bay Elementary School Active Route to School Plan, as a particularly concerning area for students to walk. Through this process, parents indicated that this was one of the key barriers to allowing children to walk

to and from school. This location is especially challenging to construct because of the topography.

2. Westwood Road – Fleming Place to Carnduff Place
Class D Estimate: \$360,000

This is a location that was identified through the City's Road Safety Working Group as the last gap of raised sidewalk on Westwood Road between Jingle Pot Road and Westwood Lake. This corridor is used by students accessing transit on Jingle Pot Road during the school year and by residents enjoying the Lake and trails during the summer. Infill development is complete in this area and so the only way for this sidewalk to be constructed will be by the City.

3. Haliburton Street – Woodhouse Street to Robins Street
Class D Estimate: \$554,000

Haliburton Street goes through one of the oldest areas of Nanaimo and the vast majority of this neighbourhood has sidewalks that date back to the creation of the City. This area includes many of the first complete streets in Nanaimo. The 700 block appears to have been missed during the growth of the City and leaves a gap between the City and Chase River Communities.

4. Lost Lake Road
Class D Estimate: \$10,000,000/km

Speeding, walking, and biking issues have been a concern along Lost Lake Road for many years. This is a road that was built to a rural mountainous standard long before being incorporated into the City, and as such, does not meet current expectations for mobility. Staff have explored many scenarios to mitigate these concerns but continually encounter the same barrier, cost. Most recent estimates place improvement costs along this corridor at roughly \$10,000,000/km with significant impacts to existing properties. Utilizing the Pedestrian Unallocated Budget, to make changes along Lost Lake Road would only allow for approximately 30m of sidewalk, which would have limited benefit. Staff are currently exploring traffic calming opportunities; however, this is still preliminary and requires extensive public consultation.

Intersection Upgrades

1. Uplands Drive at McRobb Avenue – Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons
Class D Estimate: \$20,000

The intersection of Uplands Drive and McRobb Avenue is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Major road within the McGirr Elementary and Dover High School catchments. It is also in an area of active development and densification, and is on the outer limits of the Woodgrove Mobility Hub. Adding Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons will increase pedestrian visibility and comfort when using this crossing, which will serve to encourage more people to walk within the area.

2. Victoria Road at Esplanade Street – Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons and Curb Extensions
Class D Estimate: \$75,000

The intersection of Victoria Road and Esplanade is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Major road within the Downtown Mobility Hub. Adding Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons and curb extensions will increase pedestrian visibility and comfort when using this crossing, which will serve to encourage more people to walk within the area.

3. Waddington Road at St. George Crescent – Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons and Curb Extensions
Class D Estimate: \$75,000

The intersection of Waddington Road and St. George Crescent is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Major road within the Hospital Mobility Hub. It is also a connection between two parks, two schools, and in a walking oriented neighbourhood. Adding Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons and curb extensions will increase pedestrian visibility and comfort in using this crossing, which will serve to encourage more people to walk within the area.

4. Hammond Bay Road at Nottingham Drive (south) - Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons
Class D Estimate: \$20,000

Hammond Bay Road is a Major road that was constructed prior to being incorporated into the City and like Lost Lake Road, was built to a rural mountainous standard. Walking and biking have been concerns here for many years. Similar to Lost Lake Road, Staff have explored many scenarios to mitigate these concerns, but continually encounter the same barrier, cost. Most recent estimates place improvement costs along this section of Hammond Bay Road (Friar Tuck to Nottingham) at roughly \$10,000,000/km with significant impacts to existing properties. In an effort to provide support to pedestrians in the area, Staff have focused on crossings at strategic locations such as connections between neighbourhoods or transit stops. Nottingham is a location that meets both of these criteria.

5. Front Street at Port Drive – Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons and Curb Extensions
Class D Estimate: \$110,000

Through 2019, Staff have been taking a specific focus on the Downtown Mobility Hub. There are many projects that have been identified through this and that are already included in the current Financial Plan. Some items have come out that are not currently in the plan and need attention in a timely manner. One of these is pedestrian mobility to and from the newly created transit hub. Pedestrians are well served at the westerly side. However, access at the easterly end is challenging. Staff have had several discussions with Transit Staff and have heard clearly from the public that there is a desire to cross Front Street at Port Drive. Merely adding a crosswalk is not recommended as this is a long crossing and visibility from the Port Place Mall side, is not acceptable.

Summary

When considering which locations represent the best investment in our communities needs to support walkability, it is worth noting that pedestrian collisions rarely occur along corridors, instead, they typically occur at crossings. That said, pedestrians spend most of their journeys on

corridors, and if they are not comfortable they are not likely to walk. Staff strive to strike a balance between strategic efforts to generate mode shift versus necessary investments to support pedestrian safety. With this in mind, Staff have provided several options for consideration, but ultimately recommend that it is most appropriate for these funds to be used to focus on enhancing pedestrian safety at intersections. With this, Staff recommend that the \$300,000 Pedestrian Unallocated Funds be allocated to the projects listed under “Intersection Upgrades”.

OPTIONS

1. That Council approve the recommendation that \$300,000 Pedestrian Unallocated Funds be allocated to the projects listed under “Intersection Upgrades”.
 - An advantage of this option is that it provides a focus on safety enhancements for pedestrian mobility.
 - Another advantage of this option that it is primarily based on requests or feedback from the community, while still being mindful of strategically supporting walkability in our most pedestrian dominant areas.
 - A disadvantage of this option is that focusing on intersections over corridors does not address other concerns raised by the community.
 - Financial Implications – funding for the project is included in the approved Provisional 2020 – 2024 Financial Plan.

2. That Council approve the alternate recommendation to use the \$300,000 Pedestrian Unallocated Funds to complete the sidewalk project on Departure Bay Road between Alan-A-Dale Place and Wardropper Park.
 - The advantage of this option is that it provides a focused improvement that has been identified by a specific stakeholder in the community and will serve to reduce barriers to walking for children attending a specific school.
 - The disadvantage of this option is that this is a very focused project and has a limited impact on the community as a whole.
 - Financial Implications – funding for the project is included in the approved Provisional 2020 – 2024 Financial Plan.

3. That Council provide direction to Staff to defer a decision on this Budget item until a later date.
 - The advantage of this option is that it allows the City to defer a decision, and potentially enables these funds to be used for another purpose at a later date:
 - The disadvantage of this option is that a deferral will likely impede any of these projects being built within a year.
 - Financial Implications, none.

4. That Council direct Staff to eliminate this Budget for the 2020 year of the 2020-2024 Financial Plan.

- The advantage of this option is that the funds could be used for another purpose in the 2020 Annual Budget.
- The disadvantage is that projects supporting pedestrian safety and mobility will not be completed as recommended.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Staff recommend taking a safety focused approach at multiple locations across the City to provide a community wide benefit.
- Each location has both safety and connectivity benefits which serve to balance strategic and operational needs.
- These projects support a broad spectrum of groups within the City, ranging from Schools to Transit.

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