

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 22, 2021

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SUBJECT CANADA HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE – FIRST INTAKE

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with information on two potential projects for the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative, and obtain a Council resolution.

### **Recommendation**

That the Governance and Priority Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative for the E & N Trail Lighting Project.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Canada Healthy Communities Initiative is a \$31 million investment from the Government of Canada announced February 9<sup>th</sup> to fund small-scale infrastructure projects to create safer, more vibrant and inclusive communities. The program is available to local governments, Indigenous governing bodies, provincial or territorial organizations delivering municipal services, and federally or provincially incorporated not for profit organizations.

Healthy Communities Initiative projects will respond to identified needs arising from impacts of COVID-19; create and adapt public spaces, and programming and services for public spaces in the public interest; demonstrate consideration of and connections with the community; serve the general public or a community disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 ; and fall within the three Healthy Communities Initiative theme areas. The three theme areas are safe and vibrant public spaces, improved mobility options and digital solutions.

Eligible projects must be completed by June 30, 2022. There are two intake dates for the grant; March 9, 2021 and June 25, 2021. Municipalities may submit one application per intake for 100% funding of eligible project costs up to \$250,000.

The grant application deadline for the first intake is **2021-MAR-09**.

## **DISCUSSION**

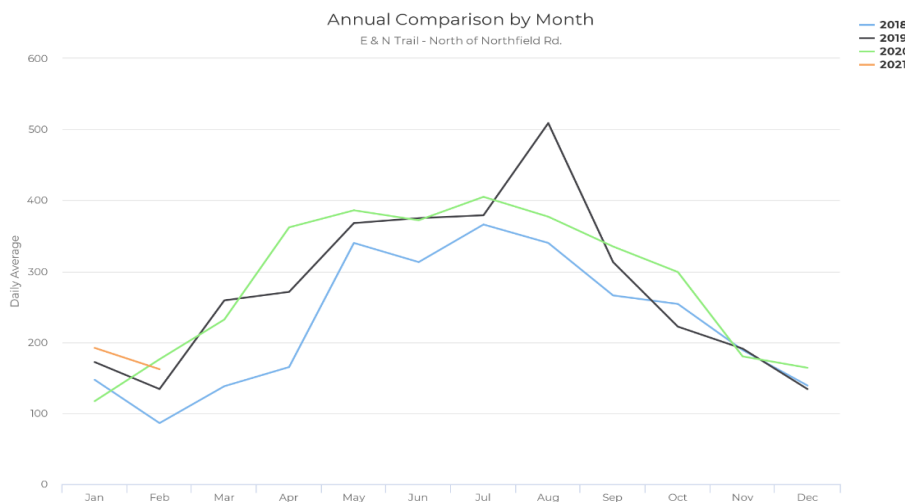
Staff identified the following two potential projects as the best candidates for the first intake of this initiative based on the short time lines to complete the application.

- Lighting of the E&N Trail
- Lenhart Bridge Replacement

Staff will bring forward a shortlist of projects for the second intake to the April Finance and Audit Committee meeting for Council's consideration.

### **Lighting E & N Trail**

The E&N trail is an All Ages and Ability (AAA) Active Transportation link between the Rutherford, Country Club, Hospital, and Downtown Mobility Hubs. With the completion of the Metral Drive Complete Streets project, this link will be extended north to the Woodgrove Mobility Hub effectively linking all mobility hubs/urban nodes north of Downtown. Use of the trail continues to increase, with the graph below showing daily average usage over the last 3 years.



The original section of the E&N, south of Mostar Road, is not currently lit which creates public safety concerns and is a barrier to year round and evening use, as reflected by the winter months in the graph above. Lighting approximately 750 meters of the paved trail will provide the opportunity for residents to enjoy an accessible, safe, socially-distanced recreational and commuting corridor. The vibrancy and enjoyment of this trail will be increased with the inclusion of public art by incorporating banners on the light fixtures. This project is supported by public feedback from our current Relmagine Nanaimo public engagement, and the City of Nanaimo's Transportation Master Plan. The opportunity presented by the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative will enable the upgrade of this corridor to help increase safe social connectivity, walkability, and bike-ability.

Costs to light approximately 750 meters of trail (Northfield to Dorman and/or other priority locations) with banner friendly light fixtures is estimated at \$250,000. This project is not included in the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan.

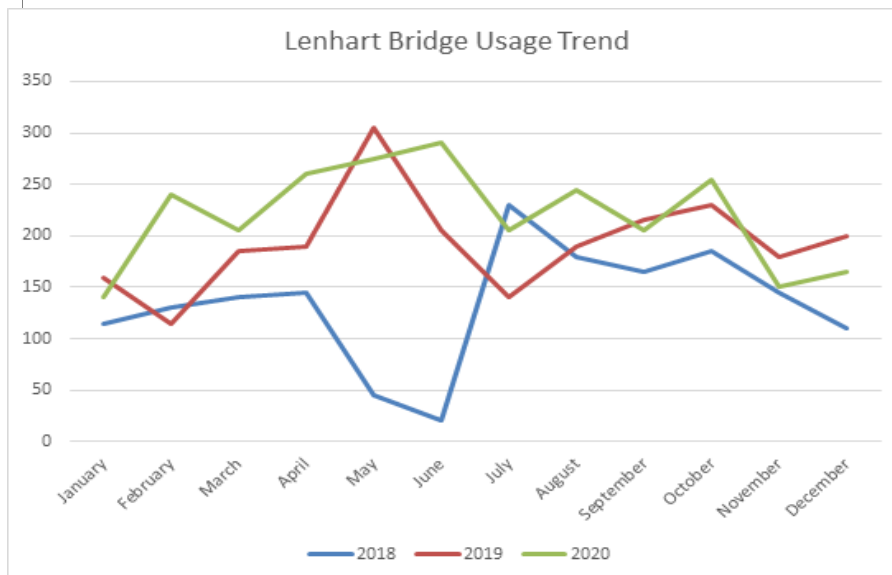
## Lenhart Bridge Replacement

The Lenhart Bridge is an existing pedestrian footbridge over the Millstone River that connects Riverside Drive with an existing trail system in the northeast corner of Bowen Park. The existing bridge has a width of 1.4m with a wooden deck and chain-link fence railings, and is in fair condition overall. While the existing bridge provides a pedestrian connection, the narrow width and offset gates forces cyclists to dismount to cross.

Upgrading the crossing for the purpose of active transportation would entail replacing the bridge with a new 4 metre wide single span structure complete with guardrails, new concrete abutments, and a wearing surface appropriate for all forms of transportation. The added width provides a safer, socially-distanced cross-section for various users, and a reduction in approach grades would support accessibility.

With the completion of the Bowen Park Railway and Utility Upgrade project, this would significantly enhance an existing mobility link between the hospital and downtown areas. The trailway lighting improvements on the south side of the bridge with the existing lighting on the north will serve to improve visibility and safety for users, with a resulting increase in utilization. The opportunity to upgrade this bridge to an active transportation link would naturally complete this corridor and significantly improve a preferred mobility link.

The conceptual cost to replace the bridge structure is estimated to be \$250,000. If funding is successful, detailed design, procurement and construction would take place in the fall of 2021 and spring 2022.



## **OPTIONS**

1. That Council direct Staff to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative for the Lighting of the E & N Trail.
  - The advantages of this option: Lighting the original section of the E&N trail will increase safety and allow for increased usage of an accessible trail that provides socially-distanced recreational and commuting opportunities. The project can also be undertaken quickly and is scalable.
  - Financial Implications: This project is not currently in the 2021 - 2025 Financial Plan. If the application is successful, we would receive the full project cost in grant funding. This project would be contingent on a successful grant application.
2. That Council direct Staff to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative for the Lenhart Bridge Replacement project
  - The advantages of this option: Upgrading the existing bridge will complete this corridor and significantly improve a preferred mobility link.
  - Financial Implications: Only the conceptual design stage (\$16,000) of this project is currently in the 2021 - 2025 Financial Plan. If the application is successful, we would receive the full project cost in grant funding. The detailed design, procurement and construction of this project in 2021 and 2022 would be contingent on a successful grant application.
3. That Council provide alternative direction to Staff for a project to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative. |

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The Canada Healthy Communities Initiative provides up to \$250,000 of funding for eligible project costs
- The City may submit one application for each intake.
- Applications for the first intake are due by 2021-MAR-09.

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