

# Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING    APRIL 14, 2021

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SUBJECT              CANADA HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE – SECOND  
INTAKE

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

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

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative for the Maffeo Sutton Playground Phase 2.

## **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 2022-JUN-30. There are two intake dates for the grant; 2021-MAR-09 and 2021-JUN-25. Municipalities may submit one application per intake for 100% funding of eligible project costs up to \$250,000. Under the first intake, the City of Nanaimo applied for funding for the Lighting of the E&N Trail Phase 1 (Northfield to Dorman).

The grant application deadline for the second intake is **2021-JUN-25**.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff shortlisted the following four potential projects as the best candidates for the second intake of this initiative.

- Maffeo Sutton Playground Phase 2
- Needham Street Sidewalk
- Lenhart Bridge
- Lighting of the E&N Trail Phase 2

Additional projects considered, and their approximate value are listed in the attached Appendix.

### **Maffeo Sutton Playground Phase 2**

Maffeo-Sutton Park is Nanaimo's premier waterfront park space. In 2017, Council passed a motion for City staff to work with the Nanaimo Child Development Centre, Rotary Club of Nanaimo, and other community partners, to develop a plan for Maffeo- Sutton Park playground as the majority of the playground and surfacing had reached end of life and did not meet safety standards. The motion was to design this park to be all-inclusive and appeal to people of all ages and abilities.

A multi-phased plan was created to redevelop the space with traditional play elements, significant seating areas, planting, public art, public circulation routes, and interpretive materials with a theme to reflect the traditional First Nations territory. Phase 1 of the plan, which focused on inclusive play for 5 – 12 year olds, was completed in June 2020. As well, Rotary Centennial Garden with paving, plants, pagodas and logs was installed on nearby green space. Phase 2 focuses on inclusive play features for 2 - 5 year olds, upgraded safety surfacing and additional landscaping.

Phase 2 of this project will complete the upgraded playground space in Maffeo Sutton Park, the playground will be fully inclusive and accessible to all in Nanaimo.

Phase 2 of the project would supply and install new inclusive and accessible play equipment for ages 2 - 5 that meets Canadian Safety Association guidelines for children's play spaces and equipment, upgrade the safety surfacing to wood fiber and pour in place rubber. Landscaped areas, seating, hard surface trails and art features would also be added to the space. The project will include removal of existing play equipment and safety surfacing, and improved drainage, irrigation and electrical infrastructure to support the new space.

The opportunity presented by the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative will upgrade this playground and provide the opportunity for residents to enjoy an accessible, safe, outdoor space.

The City has budgeted \$663,300 for Maffeo Sutton Playground Phase 2 in 2023 of the 2021 - 2025 Financial Plan. If the grant application is successful, the project would be accelerated to 2021 in the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan, and the \$413,300 remaining would be funded by PILTS.

## **Needham Street Sidewalk – Haliburton Street to Irwin Street**

Needham Street is located within 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. Snuneymuxw First Nation is conducting work on IR No. 1 which will connect to this proposed sidewalk. The Nation and local community have requested improvements to make their neighbourhood more walkable.

The cost for this project has been estimated at \$150,000, and has been included as part of the allocation of Unallocated Pedestrian Funds in the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan.

## **Lighting E & N Trail Phase 2**

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.

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 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 (Dorman Road to Bowen Road 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 Trailway 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 \$237,000. If funding is successful, detailed design, procurement and construction would take place in the fall of 2021 and spring 2022.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative for Phase 2 of the Maffeo Sutton Playground.
  - The advantages of this option: This will further the goal of making the park all-inclusive and appealing to people of all ages and abilities.
  - Financial Implications: The cost for Phase 2 has been estimated at \$663,300. If the grant application is successful, the City would be eligible for up to \$250,000 of funding towards the project, with the remaining \$413,300 to be funded by the City. Currently, the City has budgeted \$663,300 in 2023 of the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan. If selected, the project would be accelerated to 2021 in the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan with the City's portion funded from PILTS. Acceleration of the project would be contingent on a successful grant application.
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative for Needham Street Sidewalk – Haliburton Street to Irwin Street.
  - The advantages of this option: Incorporating the requested sidewalk in conjunction with the planned utility upgrade, and in partnership with Snuneymuxw would be a cost effective way to complete the work.
  - Financial Implications: \$150,000 funding for this project has been included in the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan. If the grant was successful, we would received the full project cost in grant funding, and be able to reallocate the \$150,000 to other pedestrian priorities.
3. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to submit an application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative for the Lighting of the E & N Trail Phase 2.
  - 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, the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan will be amended with the project fully funded from the grant.

4. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend 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, however a report will be presented to Council for the construction phase of the project at an upcoming meeting. If the application is successful, the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan will be amended with the construction fully funded from the grant. The detailed design, procurement and construction of this project in 2021 and 2022 would be contingent on a successful grant application.
5. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend 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 second intake are due by 2021-JUN-25.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix A: Listing of other projects considered |

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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