

DATE OF MEETING MAY 3, 2021

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**SUBJECT LENHART BRIDGE UPGRADE OPTIONS**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with options to upgrade the Lenhart Bridge in Bowen Park to active transportation standards.

### **Recommendation**

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to include \$237,000 for the Lenhart Bridge replacement project in 2022 of the Draft 2022 – 2026 Financial Plan for consideration during the budget review process.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the north east corner of Bowen Park, the trail system connects to Riverside Drive via an existing pedestrian bridge over the Millstone River, adjacent to Lenhart Avenue, shown on Attachment A. At the November 23<sup>rd</sup> Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting, Council directed Staff to provide options to upgrade this existing pedestrian bridge to accommodate cyclists. The Bowen Park Trailway and Utility Upgrades project is scheduled for construction this summer and will include improvements to the existing asphalt trailway through Bowen Park to improve connectivity and increase utilization by pedestrians and cyclists. Council saw this project as an opportunity to improve the connection from Bowen Park to the Townsite neighbourhood.

## **DISCUSSION**

For cyclists travelling in the Central Nanaimo area, the current options east of the Parkway to cross the Millstone River are:

- Bowen Road
- Lenhart Bridge
- Wall Street
- Multi-use Trail Bridge at Caledonia Avenue & Barsby Avenue
- The Lions Great Bridge to Maffeo Sutton Park

Three of the options are west of the E&N Corridor, and of those, only Lenhart Bridge is off road and could be considered as an **All Ages and Abilities** potential option. Current usage of the Lenhart Bridge is moderate but appears to be increasing. The Bowen Park Trail system is generally limited to day time usage due to the lack of comfort with the currently unlit condition;

however, following this year's sewer and trail upgrades (addition of lighting), it is expected that usage will increase dramatically as this route between the Hospital, Downtown, and VIU has very desirable characteristics with moderate grades, is away from traffic, and in a picturesque setting.

The Lenhart Bridge is an existing pedestrian bridge over the Millstone River that connects Riverside Drive with an existing trail system in the northeast corner of Bowen Park. The existing bridge is 1.4m wide, with a wooden deck and chain link fence railings. While the existing bridge provides a pedestrian connection, the narrow width and offset gates force cyclists to dismount to cross. The existing chain link fence panels are insufficient as guardrails for combined pedestrian and cyclist use as they lack handrails and are not the required height for cyclists. The concrete structure was built in the 1960's and is in fair condition, overall.

To meet the anticipated increase in demand for active transportation users, a replacement bridge would require a deck width of 4m, guardrails that achieve the height requirements for combined pedestrian and cycling use, and a good wearing surface for cyclists. The added width would provide a safer, socially-distanced cross-section for various users, and a reduction in approach grades would support accessibility.

An assessment of the bridge was completed to evaluate replacement options. The spacing of the existing beams, and width of the abutments at each end, do not support the wider 4m bridge required. Additionally, no construction or engineering details are available for the support beams or abutments, which further limits the potential retrofit of these components. It was determined that the bridge could not be modified using any of the existing components as, structurally, these are not intended for the application being used and would be cost prohibitive to retrofit for this purpose going forward.

The conceptual cost to replace the bridge structure is estimated to be \$237,000 and includes a 25% contingency. Detailed design and procurement could be accelerated to support construction in the fall of 2021 or spring of 2022, pending senior government approvals.

With the completion of the Bowen Park Trailway and Utility Upgrades project, upgrading the Lenhart Bridge would enhance an existing mobility link between the Hospital, VIU, 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.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to include \$237,000 for the Lenhart Bridge replacement project in 2022 of the Draft 2022 – 2026 Financial Plan for consideration during the budget review process.
  - The advantage of this option is that this project creates an enhanced mobility link between the Hospital, VIU, and Downtown areas.
  - Financial Implications: \$237,000 will be added to year 2022 for consideration of the Lenhart Bridge Replacement project.
2. That Council direct Staff not to pursue the project.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- An opportunity exists to upgrade an existing pedestrian bridge to active transportation standards as part of a major project.
- The existing Lenhart Bridge cannot be retrofitted to meet current active transportation standards.
- This project will support a broad spectrum of neighbourhoods, park users, and stakeholders within the City.
- The estimated cost to replace the bridge is \$237,000.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A - Lenhart Bridge Location |

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#### **Concurrence by:**

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