

DATE OF MEETING JUNE 21, 2021

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SUBJECT ALLOCATION OF PEDESTRIAN BUDGET TO ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY - PART 2

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present Part 2 of the Pedestrian Unallocated Budget towards transportation accessibility improvements for Council's consideration.

Recommendation

That Council allocate the remaining Pedestrian Unallocated Budget as follows:

- \$200,000 for transit stop accessibility improvements at the locations in Figure 1 of the report titled "Allocation of Pedestrian Budget to Enhance Accessibility - Part 2", dated 2021-JUN-21;
- \$250,000 for traffic signal accessibility improvements at the locations in Figure 2 of the report titled "Allocation of Pedestrian Budget to Enhance Accessibility - Part 2", dated 2021-JUN-21; and
- \$45,000 for miscellaneous accessibility improvements allocated to the Small Scale Road Improvement budget.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2018, Council allocated \$300,000 each year, for pedestrian enhancements. Council increased this amount to \$1,000,000 for 2021. Council allocated \$505,000 of this budget to general pedestrian infrastructure projects at its meeting of March 15, 2021. As part of that report, Staff suggested that the remaining funds could be directed to address systemic accessibility deficiencies in the transportation system.

In an effort to ensure the highest priority barriers to mobility were being considered, the content of this report was presented to Council's Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) on May 26th, 2021. The committee endorsed the suggested allocations (Attachment A) and Staff are now recommending that Council allocate the remaining \$495,000 to accessibility improvements with a focus on transit stops, traffic signals, and miscellaneous accessibility needs.

DISCUSSION

Council's Strategic Plan and the Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan emphasize the importance of accessibility and inclusion in the transportation system. Staff propose that Part 2

of the Pedestrian Unallocated Funds, approximately \$495,000, focus on accessibility improvements, in support of these policies.

For the purposes of this report, the term accessibility is focussed on the needs of people living with limited mobility. Through consultation with the ACAI, and through targeted REIMAGINE NANAIMO engagement with people living with limited mobility, opportunities for improving transportation accessibility in Nanaimo were identified.

There are many historically built segments of the transportation network that remain inaccessible. Moving forward, the City’s new Complete Streets Standards will ensure that new roadway projects will be built to an accessible standard through the capital program. However, Staff are proposing a series of retrofits, with a view to short term, lower cost improvements to accessibility that can be realized earlier than if the improvements were absorbed into longer term, high cost capital projects.

Staff recommend targeting accessibility upgrades in three general areas: transit stops, traffic signal improvements, and miscellaneous improvements. For transit stops and traffic signals, Data and field observations will help identify the locations, types of projects, and priorities. To identify miscellaneous small scale improvements, Staff will seek input from ACAI and Council. Discussion about each target area follows:

1. Transit Stops

Accessibility related to transit was a predominant theme that arose from REIMAGINE NANAIMO consultation. City and Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Staff have been working together to ensure this input informs the region’s Transit Redevelopment Strategy.

In addition to transit accessibility, opportunities for accessibility improvements were identified within the pedestrian realm at transit stops. The City records which transit stops are considered wheelchair accessible and which are not. Staff also access BC Transit data showing the number of people getting on and off the bus at any given stop. Together, this information allows us to identify the inaccessible transit stops that are used most frequently, suggesting the highest need for accessibility improvements (See Figure 1 Below).

On October 19, 2020, Council passed a motion “to direct Staff to prepare a report for improving transit stops within the City of Nanaimo, including options to ensure all bus stops are uniform and highly visible so they are accessible for all citizens”. This was based on a motion made by the ACAI, and there is an opportunity to address the intent of that motion at this time.

Staff recommend allocating \$200,000 of the remaining Pedestrian Unallocated budget towards improving accessibility at the most frequently used inaccessible bus stops, and visual accessibility at as many bus stops as possible within the funding limits, starting with those that are most frequently used.

Figure 1

Number	Proposed Accessibility Upgrades – Transit Stops
1	5th Street at Shepherd Avenue (EB)
2	Wakesiah Avenue 120 block (NB)
3	Wakesiah Avenue 160 block (NB)

4	Bruce Avenue at Albion Street (NB)
5	Hammond Bay Road at Salmon Berry Way (WB)
6	Hammond Bay Road at Frontage (WB)
7	Dover Road at Dickinson Road (EB)
8	Uplands Drive at Littleford Road (EB)
9	Wakesiah Avenue 170 block (SB)
10	Hammond Bay Road at Parkway Drive(WB)
11	Uplands Drive at Butternut Drive (EB)
12	Labieux Road at Porcupine Hill Trail (WB)
13	Uplands Drive at Long Lake Terrace(EB)
14	Park Avenue at Murray Street(NB)
15	Hammond Bay Road at Malaspina Crescent (EB)
16	Hammond Bay Road at Tiki Way(EB)
17	Hammond Bay Road at Yorkshire Terrace(EB)
18	Hammond Bay Road 3000 block (NB)
19	Uplands Drive at Sunrise Place (EB)
20	Hammond Bay Road at Dunn Place(EB)

2. Traffic Signal Improvements

The City has 53 fully controlled signalized intersections of various ages, and with various pedestrian features. The typical features include pedestrian actuation buttons, countdown timers, and audible speakers which sound when the “walk” signal flashes.

Staff propose a program for full accessibility improvements at traffic signals. Data indicates which intersections are used most frequently by pedestrians. The improvements would include updated pedestrian actuation buttons, countdown timers, and audible speakers. If needed, curb cuts with tactile walking surface indicators would be added at letdowns.

Staff recommend allocating \$250,000 towards accessibility improvements at the highest priority locations, as shown on Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Number	Proposed Accessibility Upgrades – Traffic Signals
1	Hammond Bay Road at Calinda
2	Hammond Bay Road at Turner
3	Hammond Bay Road at Rutherford Road
4	Hammond Bay Road at Departure Bay Road
5	Departure Bay Road at Montrose
6	Uplands Drive at Turner Road
7	Townsite Road at Terminal Avenue
8	Comox Road at Terminal Avenue
9	Comox Road at Prideaux Street
10	Victoria Road at Milton Street

3. Miscellaneous Improvements

Council or the ACAI may identify additional items in the near future so Staff recommend that the remaining \$45,000 be added to the existing small scale road improvements budget, to be utilized as and when needed to address accessibility issues that may arise through community feedback.

Summary

Staff recommend allocating the remaining pedestrian unallocated funding to a series of accessibility enhancements that are supported by the ACAI.

OPTIONS

1. That Council allocate the remaining Pedestrian Unallocated Budget as follows:
 - \$200,000 for transit stop accessibility improvements at the locations in Figure 1 of the report titled “Allocation of Pedestrian Budget to Enhance Accessibility - Part 2”, dated 2021-JUN-21;
 - \$250,000 for traffic signal accessibility improvements at the locations in Figure 2 of the report titled “Allocation of Pedestrian Budget to Enhance Accessibility - Part 2”, dated 2021-JUN-21; and
 - \$45,000 for miscellaneous accessibility improvements allocated to the Small Scale Road Improvement budget.
 - The advantages of this option: This option addresses significant accessibility gaps in the transportation system, in a prioritized way, while allowing room for flexibility if an urgent need is identified.
 - The disadvantages of this option: This option only addresses each accessibility issue in a limited way.
 - Financial Implications: None
2. That Council direct staff to allocate the Pedestrian Unallocated Funds to alternate projects.
 - The advantages of this option: This option could bring previously unidentified projects to the forefront for swift resolution.
 - The disadvantages of this option: This option may be perceived as not addressing issues in a systematic, prioritized fashion.
 - Financial Implications: None
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Staff recommend allocating \$495,000 for transportation accessibility improvements in 2021.

- The proposed projects have been identified through consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness, and through targeted REIMAGINE NANAIMO engagement with people living with limited mobility.
- Transportation accessibility improves livability for all citizens of Nanaimo.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Excerpt from minutes of 2021-MAY-26 Special Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness |

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