

Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING JULY 12, 2021

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**SUBJECT BRITISH COLUMBIA ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with information on potential projects for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant program and obtain a Council resolution for two projects.

Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit two applications under the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program and provide a Council resolution for each submission:

- That Council; direct staff to submit an application for Metral Complete Street Corridor Phase 2, confirm the local share of \$2.54 million is available and supported, the project is a municipal priority, and the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.
- That Council; direct staff to submit an application for Fourth and Albert Complete Street Phase 4, confirm the local share of \$700,000 is available and supported, the project is a municipal priority, and the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.

BACKGROUND

The focus of the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant program is to build a cleaner and greener future for British Columbians by investing in infrastructure that supports safe, human-powered modes of active transportation for daily commuting to school, recreation, work, socializing and errands. This includes; walking, cycling, using a wheelchair or other mobility device, rolling and other modes that are winter focused or water based.

This program offers funding up to 50% of eligible project costs to a maximum of \$500,000. Stacking rules apply, with the exception of Community Works Funding, which is considered part of a local government's general revenue and not third party funding.

Two applications may be submitted and the application deadline is July 30, 2021. Council resolution is required authorizing the project and confirming that the City's funding share is secured.

Projects with a cost under \$1 million must be completed by March 2023, and projects over \$1 million complete by March 2024.

Eligible projects include:

1. Active Transportation Infrastructure
2. End-of-trip facilities and amenities (must complement the current active transportation infrastructure).

To be eligible proposed projects must be part of an Active Transportation Network Plan, Cycling Network Plan, Active Transportation Policy or referenced in an Official Community Plan. In addition, all previously funded Active Transportation projects awarded before 2020/2021 must be completed by the time of application. The City was granted funding for Metral Complete Street Corridor Phase 1 and substantial completion is expected before the end of the month.

Preferred project criteria include:

1. Improved community connectivity (connections to destinations, linages/multi-modal integration etc.)
2. Improved safety (intersection improvements, lighting, separation from motor vehicle etc.).
3. Improved economic activity (local resources, tourism enhancements)
4. Improved physical and mental health, improves air quality (encourages active transportation, incorporation environmental innovation and best practices).

DISCUSSION

Staff have short listed four projects for consideration under the current funding stream.

1. Metral Complete Street Corridor Phase 2

This project is the final phase of a multi year project which connects to the E&N Trail, and creates a continuous link between Woodgrove, Nanaimo North Town Centre, Country Club, NRGH and Downtown. It is an all ages and abilities mobility corridor approximately 1600m long and includes sidewalks, unidirectional cycle tracks, and transit upgrades. Construction on Phase 1 is wrapping up July 2021 and Phase 2 is underway (commenced after April 1st). This project is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan for \$6.8 million with the Active Transportation components totalling \$3.04 million.

2. Fourth and Albert Complete Street Phase 3 – Fourth St Cycling Lane Harewood to Pine

This project is part of the VIU Bike Route which provides the shortest and most direct connection between Downtown and Vancouver Island University. This route travels along Albert and Fourth streets which is the City's highest area of cycling ending at VIU which is the City's largest cycling destination. Previous construction phases of this route have enhanced cycling facilities between the entrance to VIU and Harewood Road. Fourth Street from Harewood to Pine is roughly 400m long and includes the junction of the Harewood Bike Route. This project is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan for \$750,000 and scheduled to begin construction in 2021.

3. Fourth and Albert Complete Street Phase 4 – Albert St Cycling Lane Pine to Dunsmuir

This project is also part of the VIU Bike Route described above. Phase 4 of this project will provide a bike route on Albert Street from Pine to Dunsmuir Street. It is roughly 800m long and provides the easterly connection of the VIU bike route to Downtown. This project is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan for \$1.2 million and construction is scheduled to start in 2022.

4. 700 Haliburton Sidewalk

Currently the 700 Block of Haliburton represents a gap in the downtown pedestrian network in that there are no sidewalks as most major roads in the area. Not only is this a barrier for pedestrians within the neighbourhood, but it is also a gap for those traveling from areas south such as Chase River or Southgate. This project will include approximately 260m sidewalk on the west side of the road, resulting in a continuous sidewalk network along Haliburton from the Trans Canada Highway to Grace Street. This project is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan for \$499,000 excluding design costs and construction is scheduled to begin in 2022.

Other projects discussed amongst staff, and rationale for exclusion of consideration are as follows:

- Lenhart Bridge – This project is not currently part of our Active Transportation Network Plan.
- Cottle Lake Boardwalk – This project is also not currently part of our Active Transportation Network Plan.
- Off Bowen Bikeway – This project is under \$1 million and cannot be completed before March 2023 as required by the funding program.
- Front Street – This project commenced construction in March 2021 which makes it ineligible as per timelines laid out in the funding program.
- Linley Valley Bikeway – This project is currently not part of our Active Transportation Network Plan.

OPTIONS

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit two applications under the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program and provide a Council resolution for each submission:

That Council; direct staff to submit an application for Metral Complete Street Corridor Phase 2, confirm the local share of \$2.54 million is available and supported, the project is a municipal priority, and the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.

That Council; direct staff to submit an application for Fourth and Albert Complete Street Phase 4, confirm the local share of \$700,000 is available and supported, the project is a municipal priority, and the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.

- The advantages of this option:
The Metral Complete Street Corridor Phase 1 project will finalize the continuous connection from the City's north end to Downtown completing a major active transportation corridor.

The Fourth and Albert Complete Street Phase 4 project works towards completion of the VIU Bike Route which comprises the highest level of cycling usage in the City.

- Financial Implications:
The Metral Complete Street Corridor Phase 1 project is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan funded from the Community Works Fund Reserve. If successful than \$500,000 of funding would return to this reserve to fund other priorities.

The Fourth and Albert Complete Street Project Phase 4 is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan and funded from the Community Works Fund Reserve and the Strategic Initiatives Reserve. If successful than \$500,000 of funding would return to these reserves to fund other priorities.

2. That Council direct staff to submit an application to the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program for Fourth and Albert Complete Street Phase 3 and that Council commits to funding \$375,000 of the project.

- The advantages of this option: This project also works towards completion of the VIU Bike Route servicing the highest cycling destination.
- Financial Implications: This project is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan and funded from the Community Works Fund Reserve and the Strategic Initiatives Reserve. If successful than \$375,000 of funding would return to these reserves to fund other priorities.

3. That Council direct staff to submit an application to the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program for the 700 Haliburton Sidewalk Project and that Council commits to funding \$250,000 of the project.

- The advantages of this option: This project fills a pedestrian gap between South Nanaimo and Downtown.
- Financial Implications: This project is currently in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan and funded from the Community Works Reserve Fund. If successful then funding would return to the reserve to fund other priorities.

4. That Council provide alternative direction to staff for a project to submit an application the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant program provides 50% funding up to \$500,000 for eligible project costs.

- The City may submit two applications.
- Applications are due by 2021-JULY-30

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