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**SUBJECT             ALBERT AND FOURTH COMPLETE STREET PHASE 2**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide Council with an update on Phase 2 of the Albert/Fourth Complete Street project, and seek Council direction on project related issues.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Vancouver Island University (VIU) Bikeway was identified as a medium-long term project in the 2014 Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan (NTMP) and the Albert Street section was identified in the 2020 Downtown Mobility Hub study as a short term priority. The bikeway, when completed, will connect downtown Nanaimo to VIU along the Albert/Fourth Street corridor.

The section between Harewood Road and Wakesiah Avenue was completed in 2011. The remainder of the corridor comprises the Albert/Fourth Complete Street project and has been divided into two phases. Phase 1 runs on Fourth Street from Harewood Road to Pine Street and is scheduled to start construction in late 2021. Phase 2, the subject of this report, follows Albert Street from Pine Street to Dunsmuir Street and is scheduled for construction in the summer of 2022. Phase 2 was established as a Council priority at the Special Finance and Audit Committee meeting of December 4, 2020.

The current budget for the project is \$2.4M which is comprised of \$1.3M for transportation upgrades, \$900,000 for watermain upgrades and \$200,000 for the Cat Stream culvert replacement. This report summarizes financial challenges on the project, the public consultation that took place, and presents options for Council's consideration.

## **DISCUSSION**

Phases 1 and 2 of the Albert/Fourth Complete Street project are shown below in Attachment A. In the NTMP, the VIU Bikeway along this section was intended to be unidirectional bike lanes, one bike lane on each side of the travelled roadway. Phase 2 has two distinct sections with considerations on each section:

### **Section 1 – Pine Street to Kennedy Street**

The first section between Pine Street and Kennedy Street currently has limited facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The road grade and horizontal curves make this section a challenge for cyclists to navigate. Utility upgrades in this section include watermain replacement and replacement of the box culvert at the Cat Stream crossing. Due to the road widening and utility

replacements required, it is necessary to rebuild the road through this section of the project. The new road cross section, as shown in Attachment B, includes dedicated buffered cycling facilities, sidewalks and street lighting.

The current estimated cost for Section 1 of the project is \$2.8M which exceeds the existing budget for the entire project by \$300,000. The additional costs are related to widening the road which will require a retaining wall, upgrading the substandard street lighting, and constructing a sidewalk on the downhill (north) side of the road.

## **Phase 2 - Section 2 –Kennedy Street to Dunsmuir Street**

The second section from Kennedy Street to Dunsmuir Street requires significantly less work to accommodate active transportation facilities as there are existing sidewalks and there is space between the curbs to add cycling facilities. Two concepts were developed and presented to the public for feedback in September 2021. Both options are described below and shown in Attachment C. The estimated cost of either option in Section 2 is \$500,000.

### **Option A - Bike Lane Uphill Only**

This conceptual layout was developed to balance the need for bike lanes with the need for parking. While it only offers a bike lane uphill (one direction), it retains on-street parking uphill for businesses and residents. In the downhill direction, this option restricts parking and provides a sections of a dedicated cycling lane and a section of a shared shared bike/vehicle lane. The cross section includes:

- 1.6m wide cycle lanes with 0.5m wide buffers from vehicle traffic
- Floating bus stops on the 'uphill' side of Albert Street
- Shared bus stop zones on the 'downhill' side of Albert Street
- Some parking retained on the 'uphill' side of Albert Street

### **Option B - Bike Lanes in Both Directions**

This option more directly meets the intent of the VIU Bikeway offering separated bike lanes in both directions. In order to achieve this, parking restrictions become necessary. For this option, the cross section of Albert Street includes:

- 2.0m wide cycle lanes with 1.3m wide buffers from vehicle traffic (localized narrowing at bus stops)
- Floating bus stops on both sides of Albert Street
- No on-street parking on Albert Street

## **Public Consultation**

During the Downtown Mobility Hub project, public feedback was sought on cycling facilities around the downtown area. A majority of respondents (77%) indicated general support for a protected cycling connection on Albert Street.

Additional public engagement was carried out from July 20 to Sept 7, 2021 with the intent of receiving direct feedback from residents and businesses on Albert Street. The engagement included:

- creation of a project web page, complete with details and illustrations for each proposed concept option,
- letters were mailed to 143 businesses and residents adjacent to the project site,
- a link was posted on the City website for electronic responses, and,
- direct contact was made with the residents and strata managers for the apartment buildings on Albert Street.

From these efforts, Staff received seven responses. Of the seven, six respondents indicated preference for Option A - Bike Lane Uphill Only (Option A) which provides the bike lane and parking in the uphill direction. Parking on-street was cited as being very important to the respondents.

### Parking on Albert Street

Parking on Albert Street and side streets adjacent to Albert Street was examined as part of the Downtown Mobility Hub Project (DMHP). Data collection included quantity of parking, location of parking, and parking restrictions through a combination of desktop review and field verification. The occupancy determined by the study is shown below in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Albert Street Parking Occupancy**

Street	From	To	Stalls	AM	MID	PM	Weekend	Restrictions
Albert Street	Wallace Street	Milton Street	58	52%	61%	66%	47%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unrestricted (27)</li> <li>• 2-hour parking (29)</li> <li>• loading zone (1)</li> <li>• 1-hour parking (1)</li> </ul>

The values of parking occupancy, range from 52% to 66%. As the parking occupancy rises above 85% it becomes increasingly difficult for drivers to find parking leading to circulating traffic and spillover parking on nearby streets or lots. Occupancy of 85% and higher is perceived by the public as problematic. Using 85% as a benchmark, the amount of parking currently available on Albert Street would be considered acceptable with room for additional demand.

Parking is also available on side streets along the Albert Street corridor, and the occupancy rate of the side streets is approximately 45%. The parking demand from Albert Street can be accommodated on these streets, which all currently have supply exceeding demand, even after the bike lanes are implemented.

Option A would retain approximately 28 stalls of the 58 stalls. Option B - Bike Lanes in Both Directions (Option B) would result in complete parking removal on Albert Street. The public consultation indicated a strong preference for retaining parking in at least one direction. Distributing all of the on-street parking from Albert Street to the side streets will result in a parking occupancy of 75% - 80% on the side streets in the area.

## **CONCLUSION**

Council could consider reducing the scope of the Fourth and Albert Complete Street Phase 2 project to Pine Street to Milton Street which could be completed for an additional \$400,000. The \$400,000 includes \$300,000 to complete Section 1 between Pine Street and Kennedy Street and \$100,000 to complete the section between Kennedy Street and Milton Street. A reduced project scope enables the section that is most challenging to cyclists and pedestrians, to be improved. The reduced scope would also enable the project to be completed without significant impacts to the parking on Albert Street, however it will sacrifice the completion of the cycling connection from Milton Street to Dunsmuir Street.

Alternatively, Council could consider adding \$800,000 to the project to complete the full scope of the project. There are two options for Section 2 between Kennedy Street and Dunsmuir Street. Option A provides some street parking at the expense of a fully separated cycling facility on the downhill side. Option B removes all the parking on Albert Street and provides a fully separated cycling facility to Option A.

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Phase 1 of the Albert/Fourth Complete Street project is underway and construction will start in early 2022.
- The cost estimate for Phase 2 exceeds the project budget largely due to major road reconstruction required between Pine Street and Kennedy Street.
- The entire project can be completed for an additional \$800,000.
- A reduced scope from Pine Street to Milton Street can be completed for an additional \$400,000.
- On-street parking was a concern raised by the public during consultation.
- Phase 2 is scheduled for construction in the summer of 2022.
- Funding is available for the project from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – VIU Bikeway

Attachment B – Pine Street to Kennedy Street Cross Section

Attachment C – Kennedy Street to Dunsmuir Street Cross Sections

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