



Staff Report for Decision

File Number: 5460.06.33

DATE OF MEETING JULY 13, 2020

AUTHORED BY Madeleine Koch, Active Transportation Project Specialist

SUBJECT ROADWAY REALLOCATION OPTIONS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

This report has been prepared to provide detailed options for Council consideration in response to the motion for staff to explore options to reallocate roadway space in favour of active transportation.

Recommendation

That Council direct staff to proceed with all options funded by reallocating budgets within the current approved financial plan.

BACKGROUND

At their meeting on June 8, 2020, Council passed a motion directing staff to explore options for reallocating roadway space in support of active transportation. Council considered a number of ideas put forward by staff at their Special Council meeting on June 22, 2020, and there was interest in the following ideas:

- Creating a dedicated cycling facility on Departure Bay Road
- Implementing a “Slow Street” on Georgia Avenue
- Developing a neighbourhood grant program

This report provides further information on the implications of each idea, and includes an additional option for Council’s consideration:

- Implementation of walking shoulder on the west side of Boxwood Road.

DISCUSSION

Cycling Facilities on Departure Bay Road between Montrose Avenue and Loat Street

Currently, Departure Bay Road has shared southbound (uphill) and northbound (downhill) travel lanes for cars and cyclists, with sidewalk on the east side and an inconsistent shoulder on the west side for pedestrians. Despite being the historical standard for Nanaimo, this has often been cited as a barrier for cyclists. The road is approximately 9.5m wide between the sidewalk on the east and the ditch on the west.

Staff have considered redistributing this space to allocate a marked bike lane in each direction however the minimum recommended travel lane width is 3.3m, which would only allow for 1.45m wide bike lanes; far below acceptable standards. Considering the grade, staff are proposing to keep the northbound, downhill space allocation as it is, but segregate the southbound uphill to a 3.3m travel lane with a 1.9m buffered bike lane; similar to Boundary Ave. This does not change the northbound cycling facility, but is a dramatic enhancement to the southbound (uphill), which is the most important for cyclists. See figures 1 and 2, and Attachment A.

Cycling facilities can vary significantly in design, cost, implementation logistics, and ultimately, how they impact user comfort. While this work may seem simple and economical, it still carries a capital price tag of approximately \$40,000, with an annual operating and maintenance cost of approximately \$2,000.

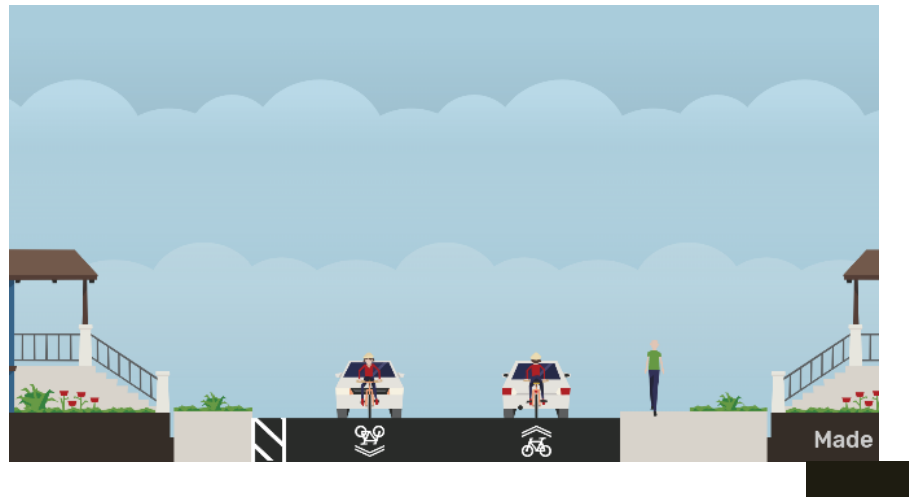


Figure 1 Departure Bay Road - Current

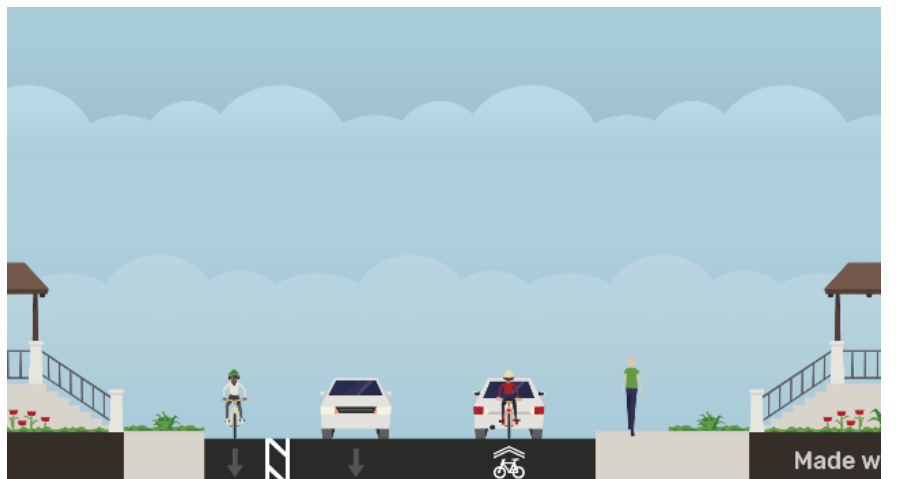


Figure 2 Departure Bay Road - Proposed

“Slow Street” on Georgia Avenue

The Georgia Greenway was identified through the Harewood Neighbourhood plan in 2008 as a priority walking and biking corridor for the community. The corner stone of the Greenway, the bridge and trail network over the Chase River, was completed in 2019, with a great deal of support and appreciation from the community. Through direction from Council to reallocate street space in favour of active transportation, staff have identified a series of options which would effectively complete the Greenway as a “Slow Street”. See Attachment B for a map reference.

The first would be the introduction of a reduced speed limit. It has been demonstrated that signage alone has limited impacts, however it is the starting point of creating a slow street. This step would cost approximately \$15,000 and would carry with it an annual operating and maintenance cost of approximately \$2,000.

The next step in creating a slow street would be to use traffic calming features to reinforce the reduced speed limit. Staff have not had time to undertake a fulsome engagement with the community, so are suggesting an option which includes temporary traffic calming. These temporary traffic calming circles (see figure 3) are economical and could be removed with little expense if the community objects. Each traffic circle would cost approximately \$2,500. Unfortunately, due to the temporary nature, they do bring with them a high operating and maintenance cost, which could be as high as \$2,500 each, per year. These could be made permanent if they prove to be successful. A follow up review would be conducted after a one year of service.

The last element of completing the Greenway would be to address the crossings at the major road intersections. This would include enhancements at the Fifth Street traffic signal, as well as additional signage and markings at the Harewood Road and Fourth Street intersections. The cost for this work would be approximately \$65,000 with an anticipated annual operating and maintenance cost of \$5,000.



Figure 3 Example of Temporary Traffic Circle

Neighbourhood Grant Program

Establishing a neighbourhood grant program would enable staff to support neighbourhoods to carry out community development projects within roadway space on an ongoing basis. Such a program would need to start with the development of a toolkit or guideline, which would establish a process for engaging, prioritizing, and executing projects. Unfortunately, it will take several months to develop this toolkit so staff will need to return at a later date with a more clearly defined program concept and strategy, for Council endorsement. It should be noted that if a program of this nature is to be successful, there will need to be an on going funding commitment attached to it in future financial plans.

Additional Option: Boxwood Road Walking Shoulder

Walking and biking on Boxwood Road has been a concern of the community for many years. In 2018, staff explored the opportunity to introduce an active transportation connection on the west side of Boxwood between Tulsa and Dufferin, however this would have eliminated parking on the west side of Boxwood. A parking study was undertaken to determine the overall impact of this potential change, and concluded that that overall parking demand could be accommodated within the area, if the parking was removed from the west side of the road. Despite this information, when the community was surveyed, there was opposition to this project. There has been new development in this area and as such the opportunities for a cycling connection have become more challenging, however it would still be possible to create an economical walking shoulder on the west side of Boxwood, if the parking could be eliminated. See Figures 4 and 5, and Attachment C. Should Council want to move forward with this project the construction costs would be approximately \$45,000, with an annual operating and maintenance cost of \$2,000.



Figure 4 Boxwood Road – Current



Figure 5 Boxwood Road - Proposed

OPTIONS

This report outlines details for active transportation enhancements at multiple locations within the City that could be implemented quickly and with funding from within the current financial plan. These options benefit the community, but may not necessarily represent the highest transportation priorities. If Council choose to move forward with these options staff recommend including all work for a total cost of \$170,000, however Council may wish to provide alternative direction on this.

Option	Feature	Cost – Construction	Cost – Annual Operating and Maintenance
Departure Bay Road	Buffered Bike Lane	\$40,000	\$2,000
Georgia Slow Street	Speed Limit Reduction	\$15,000	\$2,000
Georgia Slow Street	Temporary Traffic Calming	\$5,000	\$5,000
Georgia	Intersection Enhancements	\$65,000	\$5,000
Boxwood Walking Shoulder	Walking Shoulder	\$45,000	\$2,000

1. That Council direct staff to proceed with;
 - a. all street space reallocation options funded by reallocating budgets within the current approved financial plan,
 - b. the development of a neighbourhood grant program concept, with a report back to Council for endorsement in the future.
 - The advantage of this approach is that each option provides economical enhancements to the active transportation network.
 - The disadvantage of this approach is that the compressed timeline to deliver these projects has limited staff ability to undertake a typical project planning and engagement process.

- Funding from within the current approved Financial Plan will be used to construct this work, however consideration will need to be given to future operating budgets for the ongoing operation and maintenance.

2. That Council direct staff otherwise. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- All options provide benefit to the active transportation network and the community.
- Options address concerns or desires raised by the community.
- Options can be funded from within the current financial plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Departure Bay Road Buffered Bike Lane Map

Attachment B – Georgia Avenue “Slow Street” Map

Attachment C – Boxwood Road Walking Shoulder Map |

Submitted by:

Madeleine Koch
Active Transportation Project Specialist

Concurrence by:

Jamie Rose
Manager, Transportation

Poul Rosen
Director, Engineering

Laura Mercer
Director, Finance |