

Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING JULY 17, 2023

AUTHORED BY BARBARA THOMAS, ASSISTANT MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

SUBJECT ALLOCATION OF UNALLOCATED PEDESTRIAN FUNDS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with project options for the Financial Year 2023 Pedestrian Unallocated Budget of \$1,000,000.

Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council approve the recommendation that the \$1,000,000 Pedestrian Unallocated Funds be allocated to the projects listed under Intersection Upgrades.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2018, Council used Strategic Infrastructure Reserve funds to create an annual unallocated budget of \$300,000 within the Financial Plan for pedestrian mobility and safety enhancements. These funds were to be used to address issues that arise during the year and are more urgent than could be dealt with through the financial planning process. Council increased this amount to \$1,000,000 in Financial Years 2021 and 2022. Year 2023 of the 2023 - 2027 Financial Plan also has \$1,000,000 identified for Unallocated Pedestrian Transportation Improvements. Generally the program goals include increasing the comfort and safety of all road users with projects including small scale street improvements, a pedestrian crossing signal replacement program, updating of safer school travel plans, and traffic calming.

This report presents options for allocating the 2023 funding.

DISCUSSION

Staff receive frequent requests for sidewalks and pedestrian crossing enhancements throughout Nanaimo. Locations are prioritized annually for improvements based on observed traffic and pedestrian volumes, adjacent land use, and other factors. The ReImagine Nanaimo process and adoption of City Plan provided a greater understanding and direction regarding the community's needs and desires related to active transportation through development of the pedestrian infrastructure prioritization tool. The tool provides a clearer and more transparent method for prioritizing active transportation projects by using data on a number of factors to assign a score to each crossing (e.g. speed, volume, safety, crossing distance, proximity to school, etc.).

Higher scores represent higher priority, and lower scores represent lower priority. When considering which locations represent the best investment in our community's needs to support walkability. At the same time, pedestrian collisions rarely occur along corridors; instead, they

typically occur at crossings. That said, pedestrians spend most of their journeys on corridors, and if they are not comfortable, they are not likely to walk.

Staff feel the following upgrades, presented as two options totalling \$1,000,000 of attached funding, are worthy of further consideration for enhancements. Option 1 - Intersection Upgrades includes multiple crossings on Albert Street plus other intersection upgrades. Option 2 includes two sidewalks and Albert Street multiple crossing improvements. Cost estimates shown are Class D.

Option 1 - Intersection Upgrades - \$1,000,000

1. Albert Street Crossing Improvements from Milton Street to Dunsmuir Street
Selby Street crossing (49 points)
Dunsmuir Street crossing (53 points)
Add raised crosswalks and bump-outs
Estimate: \$335,000

The intersections of Albert Street at Dunsmuir Street and Albert Street at Selby Street are uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on a Mobility Collector within the Downtown Primary Urban Centre. There is no crossing at Prideaux Street and another pedestrian crossing could be added here. Adding raised crosswalks and shortening the crossings with reconfigured bump-outs are expected to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort along the Albert Street section of the City's Primary Active Mobility Route, and at the gateway to the Downtown Primary Urban Centre. Design would include provisions for future bike lanes.

2. Dufferin Crescent at Grant Avenue (50.5 points)
Add raised crosswalk and curb return (north side)
Estimate: \$100,000

The intersection of Dufferin Crescent at Grant Avenue provides an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Mobility Collector within the Hospital Secondary Urban Centre. Adding a raised crosswalk is anticipated to reduce 85th percentile speeds leading to safer roadways and better pedestrian experiences.

3. Pine Street and Wentworth Street (45 points)
Add rectangular rapid flashing beacons, improve street lighting, and shorten crossing
Estimate: \$200,000

The crosswalk at the intersection of Pine Street and Wentworth Street is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on an Urban Collector on a walking route to Fairview Elementary School. Adding rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB's) and improved lighting in this location is anticipated to increase driver awareness of pedestrians and provide more comfortable pedestrian experiences. This is also a crossing on a Secondary Active Mobility Route which many cyclists find challenging.

4. 400 Block of Campbell Street (44.5 points)
Add a raised crosswalk or RRFB's at crest of the hill
Estimate: \$75,000

The crosswalk at the 400 block of Campbell Street is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Mobility Local at the edge of the Downtown Primary Urban Centre. Adding a raised crosswalk is anticipated to reduce travel speeds, provide safer roadways, and better pedestrian experiences.

5. Howard Avenue at Regal Street (41.5 points)

Add raised crosswalk

Estimate: \$50,000

The intersection on Howard Avenue at Regal Street is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on an Urban Collector adjacent to a pedestrian access of Georgia Elementary School, and in an area characterized by low-density residential uses. Adding a raised crosswalk will reduce travel speeds and provide a safer and more comfortable pedestrian experience.

6. Dover Road at Applecross Road (41 points)

Add rectangular rapid flashing beacons

Estimate: \$45,000

The intersection on Dover Road at Applecross Road is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on a Mobility Collector within 200m of the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre and is in an area characterized by low density residential and commercial uses. Adding RRFB's will increase driver awareness of pedestrians and improve pedestrian comfort when using this crossing, which will serve to encourage more people to walk within the area.

7. Brickyard Road at Broadway Road (39 points)

Add islands, center line signage, revised pavement markings

Estimate: \$150,000

The crosswalks on Brickyard Road at Broadway Road where it turns into Carmanah Way are a group of four uncontrolled pedestrian crossings surrounding a single-lane roundabout on an Urban Collector in the McGirr Elementary, Frank Ney Elementary, and Dover Secondary school catchment areas. The area is characterized by low-density residential uses. The roundabout was designed and built early in Nanaimo's experience with roundabouts and does not meet current standards for roundabout signs and pavement markings. Adding splitter islands, centreline signs, and crosswalks signs will bring the layout closer to current standards. This is anticipated to improve driver response to the presence of pedestrians.

8. 3700 Block of Departure Bay Road (35.5 points)

Add rectangular rapid flashing beacons

Estimate: \$45,000

The crosswalk at the 3700 block of Departure Bay Road is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on an Urban Collector adjacent to the pedestrian and vehicle accesses in front of Rock City Elementary School. Adding RRFB's in this location is anticipated to increase driver awareness of pedestrians and provide more comfortable pedestrian experiences.

Option 2 – Two Sidewalks and Albert Street Crossings - \$1,000,000

1. Third Street east sidewalk – Rotary Field House to Jingle Pot Road

Estimate: \$300,000

The sidewalk on the east side of Third Street terminates approximately half-way between the Rotary Field House and the intersection of Jingle Pot Road near Buttertubs Marsh. The shoulder continues for more than 400 m along Third Street to the intersection with Jingle Pot Road. Adding a sidewalk in this location would increase the pedestrian connectivity between the Buttertubs trail network, the Rotary Field House, and transit stops, while increasing pedestrian comfort along Third Street. An easterly sidewalk would discourage pedestrians from jaywalking across Third Street to the nearest existing sidewalk. As well, it would improve the walkability of the stadium district which is becoming increasingly important as the district becomes busier on event days.

2. Departure Bay Road south sidewalk – Alan-A-Dale to Wardropper Park

Estimate: \$365,000

Parents of children attending Departure Bay Eco School have raised concerns about the safety of the neighbourhood's pedestrian network. The pedestrian network near Departure Bay Eco School serves families walking to and from school. It also connects citizens to transit stops near the school, Wardropper Park, and Departure Bay Beach. Providing a sidewalk would improve access to the school as well as recreational amenities.

3. Albert Street Crossing Improvements from Milton Street to Dunsmuir Street (As in Option 1)

Selby Street crossing (49 points)

Dunsmuir Street crossing (53 points)

Add raised crosswalks and bump-outs

Estimate: \$335,000

The intersections of Albert Street at Dunsmuir Street and Albert Street at Selby Street are uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on a Mobility Collector within the Downtown Primary Urban Centre. There is no crossing at Prideaux Street and another pedestrian crossing could be added here. Adding raised crosswalks and shortening the crossings with reconfigured bump-outs are expected to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort along the Albert Street section of the City's Primary Active Mobility Route, and at the gateway to the Downtown Primary Urban Centre. Design would include provisions for future bike lanes.

Closing

Staff brought forward the above locations for improvements within this program based on priority. However, there are many more that are either cost prohibitive or impractical to pursue. Many of the following locations for intersection improvements or sidewalk enhancements are not suited for this program; some improvements are of a value beyond what this program can offer, and some locations have already been incorporated into larger projects and will be addressed

within the current 5-year Financial Plan. A sampling of locations that were considered and excluded are:

Crossing Location	Consideration
Wakesiah Avenue at Foster Street	In future capital plan
700 block of Third, just west of Nanaimo Ice Centre and at the Ice Centre/Aquatic Centre	Exceeds Ped Unallocated budget
Stewart Ave at Dawes Street	Requires consultation with MOTI
Stewart Ave at Rosehill Street	Requires consultation with MOTI
Stewart Ave at Townsite Ave	Requires consultation with MOTI
Stewart Avenue at Larch Street	Requires consultation with MOTI
Uplands Drive at Primrose Drive	Redevelopment may bring cost sharing opportunities
Fitzwilliam Street at Wesley Street	Primary emergency response route
Seventh Street between Railway Ave and Victoria Rd	Requires consultation with SVI

Staff strive to strike a balance between strategic efforts to generate mode shift versus necessary investments to support pedestrian safety. With this in mind, Staff have provided several options for consideration, and recommend these funds be used to enhance pedestrian safety at intersections. Staff recommend that the \$1,000,000 Pedestrian Unallocated Funds be allocated to the projects listed under “Intersection Upgrades”.

OPTIONS

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council allocate \$1,000,000 of the Pedestrian Unallocated Funds to all projects listed under Intersection Upgrades.
 - One advantage of this option is that it balances active transportation corridor improvements and safety enhancements for pedestrian mobility in identified high conflict intersections.
 - Another advantage of this option is that it is primarily based on requests or feedback from the community, while still being mindful of strategically supporting walkability in our most pedestrian dominant areas.
 - Financial Implications - funding is included in the approved 2023 - 2027 Financial Plan.
 - Project Delivery Implications – construction industry growth; in conjunction with a shortage of workers and materials, and supply chain disruptions, contribute to a level of uncertainty with respect to construction timelines and project delivery.
2. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council allocate \$1,000,000 of the Pedestrian Unallocated Funds to all projects listed under Sidewalks and Item #1 listed under Intersection Upgrades.
 - The advantages of this option: The two sidewalks and the corridor project improve connectivity and safety for pedestrians on three busy routes.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Fewer intersections with a high conflict scores are addressed.

- Financial Implications: Sidewalks being more costly limit the number of intersection improvements which can be addressed. Funding is included in the approved 2023 - 2027 Financial Plan
 - Project Delivery Implications – construction industry growth, in conjunction with a shortage of workers and materials; and supply chain disruptions, contribute to a level of uncertainty with respect to construction timelines and project delivery.
3. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide alternate direction to Staff. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Staff have evaluated priority locations for annual improvements based on safety, risk factors, geographical data, and public input.
- Each location has both safety and connectivity benefits which serve to balance strategic and operational needs.
- These projects support a broad spectrum of groups within the City of Nanaimo, ranging from schools to transit.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Map – Crosswalks
ATTACHMENT B: Images – Crosswalks (Current Condition)
ATTACHMENT C: Map – Sidewalks
ATTACHMENT D: Images – Sidewalks (Current Condition)
ATTACHMENT E: Maps – Options
ATTACHMENT F: Powerpoint Presentation

Submitted by:

Barbara Thomas
Assistant Manager, Transportation |

Concurrence by:

Poul Rosen
Director, Engineering

Bill Sims
General Manager, Engineering

Laura Mercer
Director, Finance