

DATE OF MEETING    SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

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SUBJECT              BC ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

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

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit two applications under the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program as follows:

- Submit an application for the Beban Labieux Trail, and confirm electoral approval for the local share of \$2,250,000 is being sought and is supported, the project is a municipal priority, and the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.
- Submit an application for the Departure Bay Road South Sidewalk project, and confirm the local share of \$182,500 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 2023-OCT-27. A Council resolution is required authorizing the project and confirming that the City's funding share is secured by 2023-DEC-01.

Projects with a cost under \$1 million must be completed by March 2025, and projects over \$1 million complete by March 2026.

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.

Preferred project criteria include:

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

## **DISCUSSION**

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

### **Beban Labieux Trail**

Establishing a trail in Beban Park along Labieux Road from Beban Parkway to Dorman Rd in lieu of the current sidewalk on the north side of Labieux Road (frontage of the Public Works Yard), will complete a circular route of trails through Beban Park. It will integrate existing park facilities throughout this area, including parking lots, cycling facilities, and the off-leash dog park, with the goal of enhancing user experiences and the level of accessibility for these facilities without impacting the space already allocated to them. Numerous pedestrian and active transportation connections to Labieux Road from the trail will be established to facilitate flexible use of this amenity.

This trail is supported by the Beban Park Master Plan, which notes the extension of a trail along the Labieux Road border of the park as the most desired improvement identified through public consultation.



**Departure Bay Road South Sidewalk**

Providing a sidewalk from Alan-A-Dale to Wardropper Park on Departure Bay Road would improve the pedestrian network at Departure Bay Eco School, the surrounding neighbourhood, as well as improve access to recreational amenities. Throughout the year staff receive frequent requests for pedestrian improvements and there have been concerns raised regarding the pedestrian network in this area. This pedestrian network serves families walking to and from Departure Bay Eco School, and connects citizens to transit stops near the school, Wardropper Park, and Departure Bay Beach.



## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Beban Labieux Trail**

The grant application would focus on the cycling lane and sidewalk components of this project. The total project cost of \$2,750,000 was included in the borrowing bylaw for the Nanaimo Operations Centre (NOC) which passed first three readings at the 2023-JUN-19 Council meeting. This project will be added to the 2024-2028 Financial Plan once electoral approval is received. A successful grant application would provide up to \$500,000 of project costs which could potentially reduce the borrowing required, or allow for additional contingency for the project.

### **Departure Bay Road South Sidewalk**

The Departure Bay Road South Sidewalk project is currently in the approved 2023-2027 Financial Plan as part of the allocation of pedestrian transportation funded by the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve at the 2023-JUL-24 Council meeting. A successful grant application would provide up to \$182,500 of project costs reducing the required funding from reserves which could then be allocated to future projects.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct staff to submit two applications under the Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program as follows:
  - Submit an application for the Beban Labieux Trail, and confirm electoral approval for the local share of \$2,250,000 is being sought and is supported, the project is a municipal priority, and the project is "shovel ready" and intended to be complete within the required timeline.
  - Submit an application for the Departure Bay Road South Sidewalk project, and confirm the local share of \$182,500 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: Completion of the Beban Labieux Trail will complete a circular route around Beban Park integrating the parks facilities. The Departure Bay Road South Sidewalk will increase the safety of those accessing Departure Bay Eco School, as well as connect citizens to transit stops and recreation amenities.
  - Financial Implications: The Beban Labieux Trail is included in the borrowing bylaw going for electoral approval in Fall 2023. If the grant application is successful borrowing could potentially be reduced by \$500,000, or these funds can provide additional contingency to the project. The Departure Bay Road South Sidewalk project is currently in the 2023-2027 Financial Plan funded from the Strategic Priorities Reserve. If the grant application is successful, \$500,000 of funding would return to reserves to fund other priorities.
2. 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 2023-OCTOBER-27

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